



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

This thesis has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree (e.g. PhD, MPhil, DClinPsychol) at the University of Edinburgh. Please note the following terms and conditions of use:

This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, which are retained by the thesis author, unless otherwise stated.

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author.

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author.

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.

**Imagining the *Somali lands*: nationalism in
a transnational public sphere, and the political
reconfiguration of Somalia**

Peter Chonka

**PhD African Studies
The University of Edinburgh
2017**

Declaration

1. I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

2. I confirm that this thesis presented for the degree of PhD African Studies, has

i) been composed entirely by myself

ii) been solely the result of my own work

iii) not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification

3. I declare that this thesis was composed by myself, that the work contained herein is my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text, and that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified. Parts of this work have been published in *the Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 10 (2): 247-265 (2016) and *Critical African Studies*, 9 (3): 350-376 (2017).

Signed:

Date:

Abstract

This thesis examines the 'public sphere' of state reconstruction and political conflict across the Somali territories through comparative discursive and contextual analysis of media production and consumption on the ground in Somalia. Using Somali-language media sources - including political cartoons, editorials, radio broadcasts and audio-visual propaganda - the chapters cumulatively present a dual conceptualisation of the public sphere in the Somali context. Here, local media production centred in individual capitals of various political projects (The Somali Federal Government, Somaliland and Puntland) coexists and overlaps with a transnational arena of Somali-language broadcasting and debate from various externally-based media producers. These range from the British Broadcasting Corporation's Somali Service and popular diaspora-based satellite television stations, to sophisticated 'jihadi' propagandists, or individual geographically-detached cartoonists. Internationalised dynamics of economic and political change across the territories render distinctions between 'diasporic' and 'local' media production analytically unhelpful. At the same, ongoing popular rhetorical contestation over 'foreign' influence ensures an ostensibly paradoxical (and politically salient) discursive resilience of a culturally and religiously-defined 'Somali Ummah' across and beyond political boundaries. Although significant academic attention has been directed towards the role of decentralized 'new' or 'social' media and possibilities for civic agency vis-à-vis coherent, authoritarian state structures, the thesis argues that the Somali case highlights the significance of such public sphere technologies in altering discursive, political and security conditions for state (re)construction in socially fragmented and conflict scarred environments.

Lay summary

This thesis examines the relationship between local news media and conflict or political reconfiguration in Somalia. Examining the development of new forms of electronic news broadcasting and space for political debate, the thesis argues that the emergence of new 'public sphere' technologies has important ramifications for future political development and contestation over state structures. The chapters explore the different linkages which exist between localised news production and global circuits of Somali-language media. It argues that this distinct broadcasting environment helps account for the continued salience of ideas of cultural, religious or linguistic homogeneity alongside extreme and prolonged political fragmentation.

Contents

Acknowledgments	v
List of figures	vi
A note on language and orthography	
Acronyms	
Map 1	vii
Map 2	viii
Map 3	ix
1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands	1
1.1. The public sphere and the paradox of ‘Somali’ identity	
1.2. 1.2. A history of Somali statehood: the making and breaking of a ‘nation’	5
1.2.1. Muqdisho/South-Central Somalia: Phoenix from the <i>fire</i> ?	12
1.2.2. Garoowe/Puntland: autonomy <i>sans</i> secession and the reconfiguration of the Somali state	16
1.2.3. Hargeysa/The Republic of Somaliland: development, recognition and the ‘other Somalia’ narrative	20
1.3. Ethno-religious nationalism?	24
1.4. Habermas in the Horn? The Somali public sphere	27
1.5. Thesis structure	31
2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: ‘grounding’ a media methodology	35
2.1. Introduction: #Cadaanstudies	
2.2. Essentialism, exceptionalism and the ‘culture’ question	36
2.3. My background	40
2.4. Methods overview	44
2.4.1. Texts, sampling and critical discourse analysis	
2.4.2. Ethnography in the ‘field’: conversations and observation	55
2.5. Conclusion: reflexivity, ‘Somali’ knowledge production and narrative politics	59
3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)	63
3.1. Introduction	
3.2. Producers	65
3.2.1. Producers: technologies and networks	
3.2.2. Producers: individuals	71
3.3. Journalistic form and language: the ‘cultural’ politics of the Somali public sphere	75
3.4. Consumers: spaces of the Somali public sphere	82
3.5. Information control, insurgency and state-building	87
3.6. Conclusion: The dual Somali public sphere	91
4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination	95
4.1. Introduction	
4.2. Cartoons, critical/popular geopolitics and public sphere ‘resistance’	97
4.3. Diasporic cultural production and activism	100
4.4. Cartoons in context: the Somali media environment and visual cultural production	102
4.5. Amin Arts’ constant critique: a critical discourse analysis approach	105
4.5.1. Discursive tropes: foreign intervention and the ‘venal politician’	107
4.5.2. Discursive tropes: clan and ‘clanism’	109
4.5.3. Discursive tropes: cultural/religious imports and state contestation	111
4.5.4. Discursive tropes: situating Somaliland	117
4.6. The digital diaspora and civic agency in a transnational public sphere	119
4.7. Conclusion	122
5. Spies, stonework, and the suuq: Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics	125
5.1. Introduction	
5.2. Narrative politics and militant Islamist media	127

5.3. The strategic environment for AS militancy	130
5.4. Spies, stonework and the suuq – AS documentary propaganda	132
5.6. Islamist mobilisation and socio-religious change in Somalia	139
5.7. Ethno-nationalism and the global jihad: a contradiction in terms?	145
5.8. Conclusion	148
6. Federalist papers: polemical prose and the politics of division in the Somali public sphere	151
6.1. Introduction	
6.2. Conceptualising ‘ <i>Qaybyaalad</i> ’ in Somali studies	153
6.3 Genre and the media ecology	159
6.4. Lament in the capital: critiques of division from Muqdisho	161
6.5. Puntland: arguing an ambiguous autonomy	172
6.6. Somaliland: claim-making and the ‘other’ country	176
6.7. Conclusion	179
7. Conclusion	183
7.1. Transnational media and the ‘post post-colonial’ state	
7.2. ‘Cultural’ contestation and Somali statehoods	184
7.3. Ideology, ‘radicalisation’ and the religious public sphere	189
7.4. Implications for state-formation: the public sphere and monopolies of violence	193
7.5. Ethno-nationalism beyond the nation state	201
Bibliography	207
Appendix	218
1. Online news sources	
2. Print newspapers	225
3. List of interviews	227
4. Questionnaire sample	229
5. Selected questionnaire results	232

Acknowledgments

I am indebted to great number of people who have helped fuel my academic interest in the Somali Horn of Africa, as well as facilitate the (sometimes tricky) business of undertaking fieldwork there. Inevitably I will fail to thank everyone here, either due to their anonymity in the research or my own oversight. I was extremely lucky to have worked with Peter Landers at the Newport YMCA on various international youth exchange projects, and I'm grateful to him and Mustafe Ali for organising what would become my first trip to Somaliland. Back as an undergraduate and postgraduate student at SOAS in London, I owe thanks to my Somali teacher, Dr Martin Orwin, for introducing me to the richness of the Somali language and allowing me to extend my study and sit in on his classes. I'm grateful to all of the teachers and students I worked with for two years at the University of Hargeysa, particularly Hussein Bulhan and Mubarik Ibrahim Aar for their efforts in supporting our development of a new English language department.

I'm proud to have worked alongside so many inspirational colleagues at the Somalia Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Here there are a few people I would like to thank specifically for their support and assistance after I left the delegation to go back to my research. These include Patrick Vial, Dahabo Isse, Abdifatah Fandhaal, Mohamed Yerow and Paolo Jorge Bastos.

I am extremely grateful to Puntland State University in Garoowe, Gollis University in Hargeysa, and the University of Mogadishu for their welcome and support for my research. From these respective institutions I'd like to give particular thanks to Deeq Abdirahman (PSU), Abdirahman Ahmed Hussein and Mohamed Hujaleh (Gollis), and Mohammed Hussein Isse (MU). I'd like to thank all of my informants who took the time to meet me and share their thoughts and experiences. Post-fieldwork, I am grateful to the journalist Liban Ahmed and researcher Faduma Abukar Mursal (doing the type of immersive ethnographic work I wish I had been able to do in Muqdisho) for their advice and comments on my drafts, and thanks are owed to Tom Wolf for promoting my research in Nairobi. I would also like to thank Ismail D. Osman for his help in putting me in touch with Amin Amir, and the cartoonist himself for his permission to reproduce his work in the thesis. I am grateful to my supervisors Sara Rich Dorman and Paul Nugent at the University of Edinburgh for all their support, and for trusting that I would come back to the PhD after disappearing into the 'aid industry' for a couple of years.

I will always be grateful to my parents (Elizabeth and Clifford Chonka) for their support for my education, and to my parents-in-law (Marigold and John Sykes) for all their kindness. I'd also like to thank Joseph Sykes and Lucie Hardie for helping me out so much in Edinburgh. Finally, I owe my wonderful wife Isabelle a huge debt of gratitude for her support, understanding, and - not least - for giving us our beautiful son, Samuel.

The thesis is dedicated to the prospect of a peaceful and prosperous future for the Somali Horn of Africa – determined by its people, and in whatever political form that may take (Haddii Alle Idmo).

List of figures

Fig. 3.1: Author's photograph of Hargeysa advertisement, 2010	67
Fig. 4.1: Amin Arts' cartoon, October 7, 2014	95
Fig. 4.2: Media photograph of Muqdisho demonstration	104
Fig. 4.3: Media photograph of Muqdisho demonstration	104
Fig. 4.4: Amin Arts' cartoon, April 11, 2015	108
Fig. 4.5: Amin Arts' cartoon, August 2015	109
Fig. 4.6: Amin Arts' cartoon, September 13, 2014	110
Fig. 4.7: Amin Arts' cartoon, August 20, 2014	111
Fig. 4.8: Amin Arts' cartoon, December 14, 2014	111
Fig. 4.9: Amin Arts' cartoon, undated	114
Fig. 4.10: Amin Arts' cartoon, undated	114
Fig. 4.11: Amin Arts' cartoon, undated	117
Fig. 4.12: Amin Arts' cartoon, undated	121
Fig. 5.1: Screenshot from film 'How the stone stoves of Ceel Buur are made'	134
Fig. 5.2: Screenshot from film 'Development of society'	137

A note on language and orthography

An important strand of analysis in this this thesis interrogates the political and cultural status of the Somali language. As such, the following chapters employ the 'standard' Somali orthography of *Af Maxaa Tiri* for names of individuals or places. Nevertheless, as I endeavour to spell people's names in the manner in which they write them either in print publications or in personal communication with me, in some cases the 'English' transliteration may be used. For non-Somali speaking readers the orthography should be fairly straightforward for basic pronunciation, bearing in mind that the 'X' is similar to the Arabic letter 'Hhaa', and 'C' resembles the Arabic 'Ain'. Therefore, for example, the Somali name Xasan is usually written and pronounced in English as 'Hassan', whereas 'Cabdilaahi/Cabdulaahi' would usually be pronounced 'Abdilaahi' by a non-Somali speaker. All quoted Somali text is given in *italics*, and my English translations or paraphrasing appear in the text.

Acronyms

Again, given my focus on the politics of language, I strive to use the 'official' names of all organisations discussed in the thesis. Acronyms may derive from English or Somali (or even transliterated Arabic) and I use the most common forms in the following chapters. An indicative list is provided below:

AMISOM:	The African Union Mission in Somalia
AS:	Harakaat Al Shabaab Al Mujaahidiin
ENDF:	Ethiopian National Defence Force
KDF:	Kenyan Defence Force
NISA:	The National Intelligence and Security Agency
SFG:	The Somali Federal Government
SNM:	The Somali National Movement
SSDF:	The Somali Salvation Democratic Front
UCID:	<i>Ururka Caddaalada iyo Daryeelka</i> (The Justice and Welfare Party).
UDUB:	<i>Ururka Dimuqraadiga Ummadda Bahawday</i> (The United People's Democratic Party)
UPDF:	Ugandan People's Defence Force
USC:	The United Somali Congress

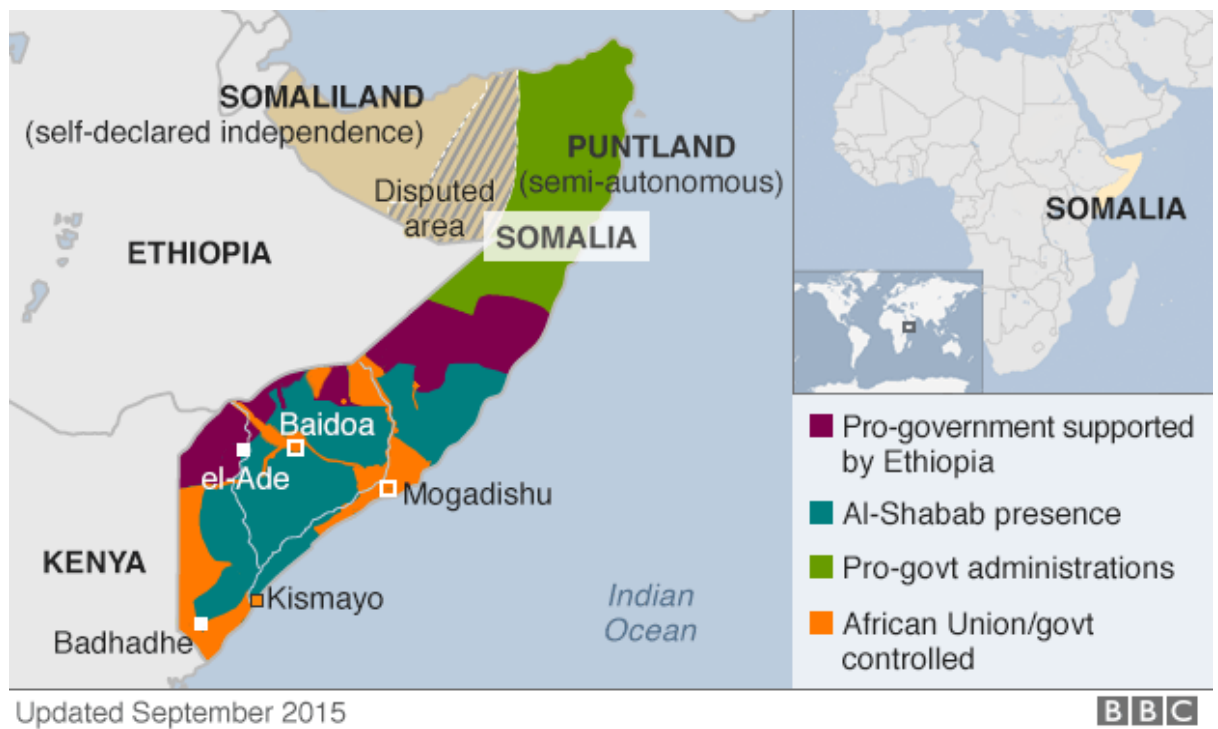
Map 1: Somalia's regions and urban centres



Source: University of Texas Libraries, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, Somalia 'ethnic group' Map 1977 (For indicative reference only, does not reflect more recent population moves and social complexity on the ground).



Map 3: Modern conflict and political control



(Indicative of geography of Somali conflicts discussed in thesis)

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

1.1. The public sphere and the paradox of ‘Somali’ identity

Popular political discourse across Somalia presents an intriguing paradox to observers of what is characteristically described as the world’s archetypal ‘failed state’. Narratives of relative ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural homogeneity exist in the ‘public sphere’ of Somali-language news media alongside the continued reality of extreme political fragmentation and ongoing armed conflict. Much scholarship on Somali state collapse and persistent conflict has focused on the relationship between (contested) ideas of a homogenous Somali ‘nation’ and the practical challenges of state reconstruction amongst multiple diverse stakeholders. Instead of conceptualising this tension solely as a primary *cause* of continued state failure, this thesis interrogates the extent to which political fragmentation - combined with a decentralized, transnational and vibrant public sphere - influences the emergence of new political, cultural and religious articulations of explicitly ‘Somali’ identities, and the opportunities and dilemmas that these present for a range of power holders, militants, activists, and political entrepreneurs.

The very fact that a public sphere of media production, dissemination and reproduction actually exists in such a dynamic form in a conflict environment is in itself of significance, and calls into question popular assumptions about the capacities, internal logics and normative orientations of media in such settings (Stremlau, Fantini, Osman 2015). This study attempts to expand on these types of political economy-based analyses of the region’s ‘media ecology’ through an exploration of the relationship between the Somali public sphere’s inherent trans-nationalism, commercial logics and orientation towards power or resistance, and the development of particular political discourses and trajectories of ideological contestation over Somali statehood, nationalism and identity.

The distinctive Somali media ecology is the product of a political history of state-collapse, conflict and reconstructions of political authority. Active across Somali public sphere(s) are supra-national communities (whether in the Horn of Africa itself or in the wider global diaspora) of producers and consumers of media products who create or identify with elements of ‘*Soomaalinimo*’ - that explicitly or implicitly referenced notion of ‘Somali-ness’ frequently invoked in the media analysed below. The thesis addresses the following questions:

- Why do discourses of ethno-religious nationalism remain important in the public spheres of an intensely fragmented Somalia, and how is such rhetoric deployed by various actors across three distinct political centres?

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

- To what extent does the particular context of media development, technology and current production influence the way in which these discourses are reproduced and disseminated, and how does this affect state-making?
- What does the political language of media (in the contexts of statelessness or state reconstruction) tell us about the potential ideological and socio-cultural underpinnings of a reconfigured Somali nation state or states?

The thesis undertakes critical discourse analysis of different types of Somali-language texts that circulate in a wider news media environment and transnational public sphere. These derive both from the amorphous and globalised context of online commentary or propaganda, as well as material which emerges from (and/or speaks to) specific political centres in Somalia in which I conducted fieldwork. These include Muqdisho (Mogadishu), capital of the Federal Republic of Somalia and base of the internationally recognised Federal Government of Somalia; Garoowe, political capital of the Puntland State of Somalia, an autonomous but non-secessionist administration in existence since 1998 with stated aspirations to integrate into the federal structure of a reconfigured Somali state; and Hargeysa, seat of government of the independent, secessionist but as yet unrecognized Republic of Somaliland.

The news media market across Somalia is as fragmented as the political sphere. Private online news websites have proliferated across and beyond the territories while different political authorities have varying capacities to either communicate as states or to control private broadcasting, whether in the form of locally or externally produced radio or television. This thesis engages with a broad range of Somali language media ‘texts’ produced from or engaging with these different political centres. These include radio broadcasts; print and online news stories, editorials, or political cartoons; as well as propaganda material employed in radical opposition to existing power holders. The purpose of a comparative analysis of a wide range of media products is to explore the diversity of the Somali-language news media market and at the same time present elements of commonality and contrast across what appears to be a highly polarised or fragmented geographical and ideological spectrum of production.

In critically analysing various types of media text associated with these different political centres, I identify and compare the ways in which tropes of ‘Somali’ identity employ various elements of the ‘paradox’ introduced above, as well as the ways in which notions of appropriate or legitimate political authority are combined with the cultural vocabularies of *Soomaalino* for various political projects. Aside from discursive analysis, an appreciation of the technological context of media production, dissemination, reproduction and utilisation helps contribute to a broader understanding of the role of political argumentation, rhetoric, and the status of the Somali language itself across the different administrations. This analysis draws from the recognition in media ecology theory that information ‘forms’ such as an alphabet, the printed word or television images are not mere

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

instruments to facilitate communication but rather that they are, like language, symbolic environments in themselves in which humanity is discovered, fashioned, and expressed in particular ways (Postman 1979, 41).

In a fluid context of political experimentation and contestation where sovereignty is divided and debated - within the 'official' borders of 'Somalia' and beyond - the eponymous *Somali lands* are being actively imagined and created. This is occurring within a rapidly changing media-technology environment that serves as both a facilitator for such processes as well as an important arena of popular and elite conflict. The thesis argues that the distinctive development and conditions of media technology in a fragmented Somalia have created an inherently fluid and transnational information environment where discourses of *Soomaalinimo* can be deployed across a wide spectrum of political or ideological intent. Political fragmentation, a lack of a national (Somalia) post-conflict reconciliation process, prolonged statelessness, the global dispersion of Somali populations and development of decentralized, transnational media have all created an environment in which certain tropes of 'Somali' identity can be reproduced and can become, at times, relevant for political mobilisation and experimentation. Furthermore, the language of politics is dynamic and important for understanding political change through prolonged statelessness and/or contemporary reconfigurations of authority: both in terms of vocabularies of politics and status of the written language itself.

Although 'clan-based' hate speech or radical religious or political propaganda may often be identified as part of the 'problem' of continuing political violence in Somalia, the types of Somali-language media texts that this thesis analyses are rarely studied any in critical discursive depth. This thesis explores the technological and discursive structure of the transnational Somali language public sphere in an attempt to understand the ways in which certain types of texts are created, circulated and appropriated or challenged. The discourses of producers deserve attention for the ways in which they reflect and influence fluid popular 'nationalist imaginaries' and subjectivities (Askew 2002). Somalia may be fragmented, and may be characterised by seemingly endemic conflict. Nevertheless, development of political thought continues through multiple channels of debate and contestation in the public sphere. These range from new expressions of independent civic nationalism in Somaliland, to radical Islamist designs for a modern Somali social order, or the claim-making of multiple interest groups and emergent 'federal' states redefining their relationship with the centre of a newly configured state of Somalia.

It is important to clarify the political-geographical focus of my analysis of these particular texts, not merely to serve as a disclaimer, but rather for its relevance to my wider argument. Although the use of the term 'Somalia' refers, in the broadest sense, to the internationally-recognised borders of that nation-state, the analysis attempts to situate different state administrations within a local and transnational media environment. Many people I know in the Republic of Somaliland would object out of hand to the discussion of their independent state in such a comparative analysis, in that its very inclusion might suggest that Somaliland was but another 'region' of the 'Somalia' that so many

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

people in the northwest want so desperately to detach themselves from. This in itself is an identifiable discursive strategy that, conversely, makes me *more* inclined to draw comparisons which have no bearing on the ‘legitimacy’ of Somaliland’s claim to independence. Media in Hargeysa discuss and comment on ‘Somalia’ in particular ways (or omit mention of it), and these constructions of the ‘other’ play a significant role in the foundational discourses of Somaliland’s distinct history, identity, development and current status.

Furthermore, Somaliland is not entirely detached from what I describe as the broader or transnational Somali public sphere, and here constitutes a subject in itself for political debate. This public sphere involves media producers who are active and whose products are consumed inside Somaliland, while simultaneously broadcasting to Somali audiences beyond these political borders. Here I refer to prominent private diaspora-based TV networks such as Universal TV, the Somali language sections of international broadcasters such as the British Broadcasting Corporation or Voice of America, as well as particular individual commentators such as cartoonists or religious figures whose material is consumed across the Somali territories.

In Muqdisho and Garoowe – political centres in what most people would agree is ‘Somalia’ – media and political commentators use different modes of expression for their discussions of Somaliland, each other, and other locations of political influence. This is of relevance to this study not out of some interest to ‘fairness’ in presenting alternative narratives, but instead for what this language tells us about the discursive or rhetorical possibilities of political communication across the wider Somali *Ummah* (*Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*). This religiously defined transnational ethno-polity is of importance to many commentators and opinion-makers in *each* of the locations studied. In comparing these political centres with Somaliland, the thesis does not assert that ethno-religious nationalism is deployed in the same ways. For example, Somalilanders specifically reject narratives of ‘Greater’ or ‘Pan-Somali’ nationalism that continue to hold some rhetorical weight in public discourse elsewhere in Somalia. Instead, I argue that each of these political entities (Somaliland included) make their cases for political legitimacy to a regional and global ‘Somali’-defined audience within a transnational public sphere of Somali media production. This ‘imagined community’ of the Somali ethno-religious nation can be seen (by different actors) to both correspond and misalign with present or desired political boundaries in the Somali Horn of Africa.

This introductory chapter traces the history of state collapse and reconfiguration in modern Somalia and then places the research questions in the context of current political developments in three specific research sites. This historical narrative is punctuated with reference to existing scholarship on Somali literary production – forms of cultural expression which have both reflected and influenced articulations of Somali nationalism through anti-colonial, post colonial, and post-state collapse periods. A definition and problematisation of two of the theoretical concepts - ethnic and religiously defined ‘nationalism’, and the ‘public sphere’ - operationalised in subsequent chapters is

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

then provided. The chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis' overall structure, integrating this theoretical discussion with the particular regional and typological media cases studied.

1.2. A history of Somali statehood: the making and breaking of a 'nation'

Unresolved legacies of political collapse render popular historical interpretations of Somali statehood live, dynamic and an integral feature of many of the political arguments explored in subsequent chapters. Different historical experiences of a single, unitary, post-colonial Somali state, combined with an appreciation of external perceptions of Somalia's apparent distinctiveness, colour various modern vocabularies of political rhetoric, justifying multiple forms of political experimentation, shaping parameters of '*Soomaalinimo*', and foregrounding ideas of normative renewal. As such, a historical overview of Somali nationalism is required, leading up to the particular post 2012 political environment which my media texts deal with.

The roots of Somali nationalism lie in the distinctive and pervasive idea that a large part of the eastern Horn of Africa has long been populated by a group of people who speak dialects of 'Somali'; practice Islam; share pastoral or agro-pastoral modes of livelihood; are organised by the sub-divisions and customary law of a 'total' genealogical system of segmentary lineage and – crucially – identify in some way as 'Somalis'. Maxamed Daahir Afrax would go so far as to suggest that 'Somali nationalism existed long before the modern concept was given its political interpretation' (1994, 241). Nonetheless, the history (and direction) of the origin and advance of 'Somali' speaking peoples into the eastern Horn is highly contested. This is due the lack of any comprehensive pre 20th Century written historical documentation, the existence and historical importance of various groups who do not fall comfortably within the framework of the 'Somali' clan genealogy (Cassanelli 2010; Kusow 1995), and the modern political significance of the myths and tropes of Somali identity (Ahmed 1995) that will be explored in subsequent chapters.

The powerful notion that the eastern Horn of Africa was populated by a group characterised by a relatively high level of ethno-linguistic homogeneity would be both threatened and intensified by the colonial intrusion in the region from the late 19th Century. British, French, Italian and Ethiopian interventions in the Horn have long been popularly understood as dividing the Somali peoples across various administrative and artificial boundaries. In response, anti-colonial mobilisation – epitomised by the influential Somali Youth League – took on a distinctly pan-Somali and anti-regionalist tone in its efforts to liberate the territories immortalised by the five points of the star adorning the later independent state's flag. These territories included the British Somaliland protectorate and the former Italian territory of the south and northeast which united in 1960 to form the independent Republic of Somalia; the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, essentially ceded by the British to Ethiopia's Menelik II in the late 19th Century; the territory which would become the North Eastern Province of Kenya given by the British to Kenyan nationalists in 1960 (ignoring a plebiscite demonstrating the population's desire

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

to join the Somali Republic); and the former French Somaliland which became the independent state of Djibouti in 1977.

Literary culture (and its mediated dissemination) has historically played a vital role in both expressing an anti-colonial pan-Somali consciousness, as well as contributing to the ideas and imageries of the Somali nation itself. Somali literary culture has long been characterised by oral poetry and the importance of poetic expression in politics, conflict and society is explored in subsequent chapters with regard to ‘prestigious’ and ‘non-prestigious’ text and the impact of changing technologies and forms of (written) media. Afrax describes the period between the 1940s and 1960s as the era of the ‘great awakening’ of Somali nationalist identity (1994, 240) and Johnson’s (1974) analysis of the development of the new genre of the *Heello* in modern Somali poetry ties artistic innovation and changing media of recording and dissemination to the development of nationalist consciousness and anti-imperialist struggles for the creation of an independent state. At the most basic level, the *Heello* was distinct from the classical pastoral poetic form of the *Gabay* (see Orwin and Riiraash 1997) in terms of its shorter length, its emerging engagement with ‘modern’ themes of patriotism and social issues, and the influence of increasingly urbanised elite of poets and performers drawing on the pastoralist cultural idiom. Although Johnson highlights the ‘northern’ emergence of the *Heello* and its antecedent forms, his analysis is characteristic of much scholarship of the post-independence era in emphasising parallel developments in the ‘south’ and a basic language shared across the territory by pastoralists, agriculturalists, town dwellers, and coastal merchants (1974, 3).

Poetic opposition to the 1954/55 transfer by the British of the Hawd Reserved Areas in the north to the Ethiopian state is examined by Johnson as an important episode both for the development of the genre and for the quickening pace of the independence movement (*Ibid*, 88). Johnson also highlights the importance of the increasing incorporation of the *Heello* genre within theatrical plays and the subsequent popularisation of nationalist themes. He cites Walaalo Hargeysa’s production of *Soomaalidii Hore iyo Soomaalidii Dambe* (‘The Somalis of Yesterday and the Somalis of Today’) as an important example drawing on the theme of colonially imposed border restructurations and the division of the Hawd territory at ‘our heart’ (Xuseen Aw Faarax, cited in *Ibid*, 98).

The territorial unification alluded to in such poems as Cabdullaahi Qarshe’s popular *Dhulkayaga* (‘Our country’) was partially achieved in 1960 with the independence and unification of the former British Somaliland Protectorate and the United Nations Trusteeship Territory of Somalia under Italian Administration. This moment of emancipation was nonetheless tempered by an undercurrent of doubt, itself indicative of the paradox of ethno-linguistic commonality and clan division across the territories. As Johnson puts it ‘one would be very hard pressed indeed to find a Somali who opposed the coming independence to any part of this country. The unity of the two territories, however, is another question entirely’ (*Ibid*, 106). Cali Sugulle’s metaphorical allusion to the forced marriage was kept off the air by the newly independent state radio broadcaster (Radio

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

Mogadishu) and is replete with pastoralist imagery warning against hasty political unification: '*Adoo guri barwaaqo ah, geel dhalay ku haysta; Geeddii lama lallaboo, abaar looma guuree*' (While you keep camels which have just given birth in a prosperous camp; [You should] not arrange a move and travel into drought) (cited in *Ibid*, 108). Despite early rumblings of discontent from the North that Somalilanders had sacrificed significant autonomy in their 'marriage' with a Mogadishu-centred south, the mood of state-builders and much of the population remained distinctly optimistic, reminiscent of the experience of post-colonial liberation across much of Africa in the 1960s.

Ostensibly, Somali political leaders were not presented with the same task faced by most other newly independent African states, namely the need to incorporate multiple and diverse ethno-linguistic communities into a single state-based national identity and political system. Levels of relative ethno-linguistic homogeneity across the Somali Horn of Africa instead meant that many of the peoples imagined to be compatriots were split across the colonial-era boundaries of the region. Nonetheless, leaders in Mogadishu still had to overcome significant obstacles just to tie together the populations and political systems of the former Italian and British Somalilands. In fact, language was an issue here. Without a formalized Somali orthography, institutions (both government and educational) were operating on two different colonially-inherited tongues. The post-independence governments of the 1960s did not achieve the standardisation of a national Somali language, and in general, despite a peaceful transition of executive power in 1967 (the first in Africa, see Samatar 2016), the wider nationalist project was undermined by elite corruption and the malign influence of political 'tribalism' in the newly independent state. This itself was a legacy of divide and rule strategies of the earlier colonial administrations, and Kapteijns notes that the independence era nationalists 'had to hitch their project of inclusion, unity and modernization to deeply tribalized administrative habits and institutions' (2009, 104).

The assassination of President Cabdirashiid Cali Sharmaarke shortly preceded the military coup in 1969 led by General Mohamed Siyaad Barre. Asserting itself against a post-independence civilian parliamentary democratic model perceived to be mired in corruption and inefficiency, Barre's state professed 'scientific socialism' and an agenda of secular 'modernisation' (Samatar 1992). Propaganda of the era blended Marxist imagery with Qu'ranic scripture and emotive appeals to the pastoral heritage of a Somali ethno-nation. Modernity was conceived of in terms of anti-tribalism (clanism) and an antipathy to elements of Islam deemed impediments to social progress. Literature and media in the post-independence era were also characterised by an emphasis on 'modernity', embodied by a population shaking off the shackles of tradition and embracing a nationalism of economic and educational development. The eventual formalisation of a Somali orthography in 1972 (discussed in more detail in later chapters) facilitated a mass literacy campaign by the military regime and is one of the few initiatives it is remembered with any fondness for today.

Maxamed Daahir Afrax's contemporary literary and theatrical criticism highlights the predominant themes of the era and associates 'modernity' with an embrace of Somali nationalism and

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

the abandonment of tribal (or ‘clan’) identities (Afrax 1987; Kapteijns 1995). This was the era of the *ilbaxnimo* (civilisational) discourse where literary production, preservation, collection and performance were seen to be integral to the development of a modern society. Afrax’s work (including numerous pieces published in the state Xiddigta Oktoobar [October Star] newspaper) highlighted the difficulties faced by researchers and critics in a context where a written culture had not been entrenched and where state institutions for the storing and development of literary culture remained underdeveloped. Afrax’s pioneering of new forms of written culture (e.g. literary criticism) was in itself linked to this project of modernity and this theme will be returned to in subsequent chapters with regards to the changing ways in which Somali language texts are mediated, consumed and engaged with.

Pan-Somali nationalist fervour reached its peak with the Barre regime’s 1977 invasion of Ethiopia for control of the Ogaden region. Whilst the Somali military successfully overran the territory, the invasion was condemned internationally as an act of aggression intended to alter colonial boundaries by force. The invasion indirectly helped propel Colonel Mengistu to power in Ethiopia and precipitated a wholesale reversal of Cold War alliances in the Horn. Somali forces were driven out of Ethiopia in March 1978 after a massive intervention of Soviet and Cuban troops. After the war, a huge exodus of Ethiopian Somali refugees into Somalia became a destabilizing factor. There was no peace agreement with Ethiopia, the activity of the Muqdisho-supported Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) persisted, and Ethiopia reciprocated by backing predominantly Majeerteen (SSDF) and Isaaq (SNM) opponents of Siyaad Barre. A rapprochement only came in 1987 in the final embattled years of both regimes.

The failure of Barre’s move against Ethiopia to begin the process of uniting the remaining Somali territories had a significant impact not only on the regime’s stability but also on the wider cause of nationalism towards ‘Greater Somalia’ (Barnes 2007), a historical theme which recurs in many texts addressed in subsequent chapters. One of the regime’s immediate responses was the facilitation of the 1979-1980 *Deelley* poetic debates which featured numerous (but predominantly ‘northern’) poets (Ahad 2015). The event was designed to engage oral literary tradition in the pursuit of modernist political aspirations (critiques of anti-nationalist tribalism) but became a space where coded anti-regime discourses could take poetic shape. Ahad’s analysis of the language of this poetic ‘polytext’ highlights the continued ‘hegemony’ of pastoralist cultural heritage (‘Samaale’/‘Sumaal’) at the centre of the Somali national myth (*Ibid*, 39-40), at the expense other groups (particularly, in his terms, southern agirculturalists) who make up a large but historically marginalised segment of the ‘national’ population. The tension apparent here in the state’s engagement of ‘tradition’ for ‘modern’ political goals also finds expression in Kapteijn’s examination of ‘discourses of moral womanhood’ in popular songs of the era. The desire for modernity (embodied in progressive nationalist statehood) also required an appreciation of ‘tradition’ in the construction an anti-tribal embrace of *Soomaalinimo* (2009, 103). However, the state’s (at times) violent antipathy towards Islam, for instance in its

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

promotion of female emancipation and rewriting of family law also generated significant popular dissent with long term implications for discourses of public morality (Abdullahi 2010). Such moves were perceived to represent a secular assault on traditional and religious values by a hypocritical regime which was itself built around a tribal clique of certain Daarood clan-family sub-clans.

The roots of the clan-based fracturing and extreme violence of the civil war era were set by the Barre regime which was adept at manipulating ‘clan’ grievances and arming different groups against its opponents or potential opponents (Compagnon 1998, 76; Kapteijns 2012, 14). The militarisation of clan identity, the influence of external sponsors, the profusion of Cold War era small arms, and significant urban/rural tensions all set the scene for the 1980s emergence of armed *jabhad* (guerrilla or ‘freedom fighter’) resistance movements in the north against Barre’s state, including the aforementioned Somali National Movement (SNM) in the northwest and the Somali Salvation Democratic Front in the northeast (Doornbos & Markakis 1994, Luling 1997, Lewis 2008). The former was a largely Isaaq clan-family dominated organisation which would eventually lead Somaliland to independence, while the latter, dominated by the Majeerteen sub-clans of the Daarood clan-family, would later play an important role in the establishment of the Puntland regional state in 1998. Both campaigns drew counter-insurgency responses from the military regime, and the communities from which the resistance movements drew support (or were perceived to have drawn support) suffered greatly from the indiscriminate violence of Barre’s forces (Bradbury 2008, Kapteijns 2012, 81). Ultimately, it would be the Hawiye clan-family dominated United Somali Congress (USC), sweeping down upon Muqdisho from the south-central hinterlands, which would oust Barre from power in 1991. A failure to reach a comprehensive political settlement between the aforementioned insurgent forces and various other resistance groups prolonged the civil war. This entailed fierce contestation over Muqdisho and violent clan ‘cleansing’ in the capital. In the southern regions the conflict facilitated the extensive expropriation of valuable agricultural land, often at the expense of the agro-pastoralist and so-called ‘minority’ populations who had long been marginalised in the development of the colonial and post-independence state¹ (Omaar and De Waal 1993; Besteman 1996 & 1998, Besteman & Cassanelli *et al.* 2000; Eno, Eno & Lehman 2010; Menkhau 2010; Ahad 2015). The violence and associated humanitarian catastrophe of famine eventually prompted the 1992 intervention of United States’ and United Nations’ forces (Clarke & Herbst 1996). Meanwhile in the north-west, a self-declared independent Republic of Somaliland emerged, a territory that retains its secessionist claim up to the present day.

In Muqdisho, violence from mainly Hawiye insurgent fighters specifically targeted those from Daarood sub-clans associated with the ousted dictator. Kapteijns documents this targeting and the inability (or unwillingness) of observers to accurately portray the specific nature of violence. Men were ‘armed and militarily prepared to kill in the name of clan’ and the more they did so ‘the more the

¹ The consequences and probelmatics of the historical discursive division between so-called ‘Sab’ (predominantly agricultural) and ‘Samaale’ (pastoralist) populations is dealt with in subsequent chapters.

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

hostile clan identities they performed became indisputably and irreversibly “real” (Kapteijns 2004, 13). Class also played an important role here, with poorly educated fighters hailing from rural and pastoral backgrounds exacting a form of revenge on the modern Somali state, embodied by the comparatively wealthy city dwellers who were felt to have benefited the most from its development and repressive tendencies (Ahmed 1995, ix). The clan targeting of violence in Muqdisho had a profound impact on the demographics of a once cosmopolitan capital previously inhabited by all of the major Somali lineage groups. The flight of a large proportion of the non-Hawiye inhabitants of the city has left a lasting legacy, both in terms of the politics of land control and reclamation in modern Muqdisho (Rift Valley/Heritage Institute 2017) and the wider ‘territorialisation’ of clan identity across Somalia. Hoehne analyses the ‘shift from borderless, non-territorially defined Somali space, to a bordered, intensively territorialised Somali space that took place during this extended period of rupture [post 1990]’ (2016, 1381), and the impact of the violence in the city that displaced residents to their far flung clan ‘homelands’ (*degaan*) can be felt in the modern context of political reconstruction and contestation across these territories.

Summarising the history of the civil war and state collapse, Compagnon usefully defines three ‘generations’ of militant organisation whose experiences, membership and agendas have overlapped through this period (1998). First he cites the early post-colonial emergence of irredentist movements in neighbouring countries (such as the WSLF in Ethiopia) acting as Cold War international and regional proxy forces; second he charts the 1980s rise of anti-regime guerilla movements organised largely (but not exclusively) along clan lines but possessing some kind of transformative political program (e.g. the SNM, SSDF and USC); and third he describes the mushrooming of post-state collapse armed clan factions with no clear political agenda or broader constituency (Compagnon 1998, 76). Whilst Chapter six engages in detail with the analytical utility of ‘clan’ in understanding modern conflict in Somalia, it is important to highlight from the outset that scholarship on state collapse has persuasively challenged the reductive tendency to emphasise the intersection of ancient feuds with modern technologies of violence (*Ibid*, 74; Kapteijns 2004, 12) and Compagnon emphasises the role of political entrepreneurs utilising kinship as a ‘ready-made ideology’ (1998, 83) for fighters most easily mobilised through existing clan structures.

The descent into clan-based civil war and regional/clanic fragmentation this period brought tremendous suffering for huge swathes of the Somali population. It remains both a highly contested history (Kapteijns 2012; Ingiriis 2013; Bakonyi 2009), as well as constituting a pivotal temporal point of reference for multiple competing narratives and political arguments. Today, a quarter of a century after the *burburkii* (destruction) of the state, a generational juncture - between those with memories and experiences of the unitary Somali state and those who do not - makes itself frequently apparent in public spheres across Somalia or Somaliland through deployments of history by those who lay claim to modern state structures and those who contest them.

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

The apparent ‘anarchy’ of this two-decade period from 1991 was not simply destructive but also facilitated new forms of political and economic organisation (Little 2003; Hagmann and Hoehne 2009; Bakonyi 2013). Local and even pseudo-‘national’ structures emerged, ranging from the state-like experiment of the self-declared Republic of Somaliland (Bryden 2003) to the judicially-orientated Midowga Maxkamadaha Islaamiga (Union of Islamic Courts) and subsequent territorial administrations of the Islamist governors-cum-insurgents of Harakat Al Shabaab Al Mujahidiin (aka ‘Al Shabaab’, hereafter AS) (Hansen 2013). The two decades of statelessness cannot be adequately conceptualised in terms of political or economic stagnation. Instead, this period witnessed the playing out of processes of political and economic contestation that had compromised the viability of the nation state of Somalia from its inception, and saw the redefinition of the political space in which the nation’s centres of power and influence would come to be reconfigured.

On the more prosaic level – and judged by the standards of ‘national’ political reconciliation or reconstruction of a unitary state – the two decades following 1991 could only be described in terms of ‘failure’, progressing through multiple peace conferences and abortive attempts at stable government in Muqdisho. Experiments such as the Union of Islamic Courts - broadly characterised as an alliance over different periods in Muqdisho and wider south-central Somalia between Islamist activists often linked to longstanding networks such as *Al Itixaad Al Islaam*, local religious-judicial authorities and certain clan groups within the business class - were enacted largely in reaction to the perceived failures of the political class. They remain an understudied phenomenon (Barnes & Hassan 2007; Mwangi 2010; Sharif 2015) and are often understood by many outside observers as merely the precursor to AS’s militancy.

The emergence of Islamist-inspired forms of governance in Somalia coincided with a refocusing of Western strategic priorities for the region, newly redefined by the logics of the ‘Global War on Terror’. Ethiopia’s US-backed invasion of Somalia in 2006 to oust the Courts’ administration - another pivotal historical juncture very much alive in the political imagination of current actors and commentators - served to empower the most ‘radical’ offshoot of the broader experiment, AS. The organisation gained both power and a veneer of nationalist legitimacy in the resistance it put up against the historical *Xabashi* Christian foe, remembered primarily for the high number of civilian casualties caused during their heavy handed intervention in Somalia (Human Rights Watch 2008). The Ethiopian-backed Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Cabdullahi Yuusuf Axmed was established in Muqdisho from 2007. It achieved control over only parts of the capital and was kept afloat almost solely by the presence of African Union ‘peacekeepers’. Power was subsequently handed to an administration led by Sheekh Sharif Sheekh Axmed, a one time member of the Courts’ administration and representative of the ‘moderate’ Islamist faction the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia which participated in the Djibouti-held talks in 2008. The withdrawal of Ethiopian forces negotiated at this conference primarily benefited AS as opposed to the beleaguered and Muqdisho-

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

confined TFG, and between 2009 and 2010 the militants rapidly expanded their structures of administrative governance across a large swathe of south-central Somalia.

This status quo of TFG ineffectiveness and AS expansion of governance persisted in south central Somalia until 2012, when the selection of the new Somali Federal Government (SFG) followed a shift in the military dynamics between these competing power holders and their international backers. The media texts analysed in subsequent chapters date from this period onwards, and my contextual historical discussion will provide an overview of the three separate political environments of Muqdisho, Garoowe and Hargeysa in which I conducted fieldwork. This comparative political introduction focuses on dominant or contesting narratives of change or *status quo* produced from or about these power centres.

1.2.1. Muqdisho/south-central Somalia: Phoenix from the fire?

Muqdisho holds intense symbolic value as an icon of Somali nationalism. Long a cosmopolitan city of trade and contact with the outside world (Alpers 1983), Muqdisho became the capital of a post-independence nation state that was supposed to represent all Somalis. Considering its glamorous and dynamic embodiment of Somali's post-independence modernity, the extreme and targeted violence unleashed in the city in the wake of the ousting of Barre's regime, and the physical destruction wrought on its architecture, Kapteijns points out that no-where in Somalia has the contrast between pre and post state-collapse realities been so stark (2010, 34). Her discussion of 'making memories of Mogadishu' traces poetic engagement with the city both from inside Somalia and in the diaspora through a changing 'architecture of Somali public space' precipitated by political breakdown and the development of new forms of electronic mass media. In this account different poetic voices from different periods of the city's post-independence development endow it with intense political, cultural and religious significance. Maxamed Daahir Afrax's 1981 novel *Maanafaay* – about the eponymous schoolgirl falling in love – epitomises the changing and contested social mores of a cosmopolitan city at the centre of a dynamic nationalist project of modernity (*Ibid*, 39; Afrax 1981). Conversely, the fact that renowned poet (and northerner) Maxamed Ibraahim Warsame 'Hadraawi' composed *Xamareey, ma nabad ba?* (Muqdisho, how are you?) from Barre's jail demonstrates both the repression of the era and an evocation of the city as a touchstone for the struggle for independence: the 'umbilical cord' of the country and 'nerve centre' of the people. In the post state-collapse period, Cumar Cabdinuur Nuux 'Nabaddoon' laments from the diaspora what has befallen the city (*Muqdishooy maxaa dhacay*). His work references the emergence of increasingly muscular Islamist discourses of renewal and the clannic manipulations of the Barre regime, whilst remaining opaque about the specific perpetrators of targeted violence in the period that Kapteijns chronicles elsewhere (Kapteijns 2010, 50; Kapteijns 2012). Stepping into more recent history, Maxamed Cali Cibaar's *Muqdishaa, mawlaad leedahay, samir ha moogaanin* (Mogadishu, you have a Lord, do not forget to be patient), is a *gabay* poem that expresses explicit opposition to the TFG and support for the

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

Union of Islamic Courts ousted by the 2006 invasion. The Islamist character of certain articulations of modern Somali nationalism – explored in detail in Chapter five – is evident here. In all of these poetic engagements with the history of the capital, Muqdisho is evoked as symbolic and gendered (often female) embodiment of the nationalist project. The changing ways in which these type of texts have been produced and circulated within a Somali ‘public’ will be reflected on in subsequent chapters with commonalities and contrasts drawn between the poetic canon and the media products focused on by this thesis.

All of the texts engaged with in subsequent chapters date from 2012 onwards and the installation of a ‘recognised’ Somali Federal Government in Muqdisho. Given the long series of repeatedly failed negotiations for political settlement and the procession of ineffectual, practically invisible, or ‘transitional’ administrations which characterised politics in Muqdisho from 1991 onwards, it would be easy to dismiss the formation of the SFG as a mere changing of faces: composed of individuals ready, once again, to make the most of international patronage whilst doing little to seriously extend governance capacity or reconfigure the structures of the Somali state. Such a characterisation, however, would be unfair, and the post-2012 trajectory of the SFG has represented a genuine shift in the political landscape of the Somali state.

The SFG has succeeded – albeit with the essential military backing of African Union Mission for Somalia forces (hereafter AMISOM) – in establishing a modicum of security and political control over all of the districts of the capital. ‘Formal’ or at least daylight AS control of neighbourhoods in Muqdisho ended with their expulsion in 2011, and security across the capital is maintained by an amorphous mix of forces which (in theory) are part of or are aligned with the SFG. These include the Somali Police Force, National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) units, the Somali National Army, and AMISOM Troops and Police, as well as (in practice) militias of local powers such as District Commissioners who fall under the Regional Benaadir administration. Although this combination of security actors is not without its internal tensions (occasionally resulting in violent confrontation) the very fact that the state has at least nominal authority over all districts marks a change from the pre-2011 reality of AS control and the division of the city into separate neighbourhood fiefdoms controlled by militias largely unaligned to any central government.

On the political front too, post 2012 progress has represented a departure from previous legislative or diplomatic stagnation. The Somali Parliament - selected for the first time through a process based inside Somalia - has succeeded in passing legislation and has voted for the ratification of international conventions. The executive branch has garnered an unprecedented level of international recognition, epitomised by the official reestablishment of diplomatic ties with the United States for the first time since 1991. More important than foreign plaudits has been the SFG’s genuine movement towards the reconfiguration of the Somali state along ‘federal’ lines as outlined in the Provisional Constitution, adopted in August 2012. While this often fraught process has been at times led from Muqdisho (as was the case with the Galmudug federal state) and at other times spurred by

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

developments in the regions largely outside of the control of power-holders in the capital (as was the case with the emergence of the Interim Jubaland Administration), a clear federalisation trajectory has been set. As Mosley notes, ‘for all its fragility and flaws... federalism in Somalia remains the dominant political process with which to engage. Even those opposed to the leadership or framing of the federal government continue (in the main) to contest their case within its framework’ (2015, 5). The framing of the federal project as the only game in town (at least in the minds of elite actors) is a significant achievement of the SFG. Nonetheless, the reconfiguration of the Somali state along ‘federal’ lines has been very much driven by traditional (Western) donors and the United Nations. The Provisional Constitution in which this is set out remains contested by actors such as AS who argue that it is an externally imposed and thus illegitimate document.

The establishment of regional administrations across the south-central regions was completed with the creation of Hir-Shabelle state, just in time for the 2016/17 selection process to facilitate the replacement of Xasan Sheekh’s administration. Targeted Al Shabaab violence and general insecurity across south-central Somalia prevented one-person-one vote elections being held. Nonetheless, a United Nations process engaged around 14,000 individuals (clan elders and electoral college delegates) in the selection of Members of the Upper and Lower Houses of the Somali Parliament, who then elected President Maxamed Cabdulaahi Maxamed ‘Farmaajo’² in February 2017. Popular interpretations or perceptions of the build-up to this ‘Vision 2016’ process, and oppositional narratives against the federal project, resonate through the public sphere and are a key theme addressed in the textual analyses of subsequent chapters.

In terms of economic development, change has also been in the sea air of the capital since 2012. With the promise of greater security and political cohesion, local business sectors and the real-estate market have gone through a visible period of growth driven in no small part to ‘returnee’ diaspora investors as well infrastructure projects led by foreign donors such as Turkey. Nowhere is such growth more evident than on certain important arteries of the city such as the Makka Al Mukarama thoroughfare running from the KM4 junction all the way up to the Parliament building and the Villa Somalia Presidential compound. Newly tarmac-ed roads, lined with the colourful hoardings of recently opened shops, restaurants, hotels, and – tellingly – the outdoor tea stands, speak to an increased sense of consumer and investor security and optimism. This is not to imply that the pre 2012 Muqdisho economy was somehow stagnant – the labyrinthine Bakaara market buzzed with commerce then as it does today - but rather that the market has opened up for outside investors looking to take advantage of increasing stability and the potential to purchase or reclaim increasingly valuable land and property.

Richly symbolic of Muqdisho’s ‘rebirth’ and constituting a stage for economic or security improvements to be enjoyed (or performed) are the city’s beaches, often full of young people and

² United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) ‘Factsheet on Somalia’s 2016 Election Process,’ September 1, 2016: <https://unsom.unmissions.org/fact-sheet-somalia%E2%80%99s-2016-electoral-process>

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

diaspora trend-setters enjoying the white sand, turquoise waters and the various restaurants and cafes that have sprung up on the now much sought after seafront real estate. This view of natural beauty - a resource ready to be tapped by a 'new' Somalia - and scenes of leisure activity are emblematic of the 'Somalia rising' narrative. This *dib-u-dhis* (reconstruction) discourse is a powerful phenomenon in imaginations both *of* and *about* the nation, and concrete developments on the ground are rightly highlighted in academic and journalistic accounts of Muqdisho (Hammond 2013). Viewed through the lenses of international 'mainstream' media and a powerful social media environment in which many politically engaged Somalis are active, the battle-lines of this discursive contest are clear: between portrayals of Muqdisho and Somalia emphasising ongoing conflict, terrorism, piracy, humanitarian suffering, and those showcasing the achievements of the changing nation, with glimmers of hope on the horizon.

This narrative contest for the 'real' or 'new' Somalia has intensified, with multiple voices clamouring to show the city or country for what it really 'is' and to dispel outsiders' misconceptions and prejudices. A foreign journalist's account of British diplomacy conducted in an airport 'green-zone', with forays into the mean streets of the city in armoured vehicles, shocked me as a reader. Although I recognized the general accuracy of the images reported, they jarred with my usual emotional reactions to them. I understood the descriptions of the execution sites, the militarisation of the airport zone and the accounts of violence, and yet I was amazed at the extent to which it was possible for me to normalise these features of the city as parts of a wider reality which is more diverse, dynamic and often much less grim³. A counterpoint may be seen in the social media 'stardom' of Ugaaso Abukar Boocow, the young Somali woman who '*Instagrams*' pictures of her daily life in Muqdisho, in an attempt to dispel stereotypes of the city and show a 'different side' to Somalia⁴. In a similar vein, documentaries produced by Integration TV ('the first English TV network for Somalis globally') portray for a diaspora audience a Mogadishu which is developing economically and gaining greater security, and serves as a call for Somalis to 'return' to the city with their families to live and do business⁵.

If Muqdisho is 'rising' like the proverbial phoenix, then it is doing so from the fire rather than the ashes: political and economic reconstruction is taking place *concurrently* with ongoing conflict. In this context, the influence of media narratives framing this complicated and non-linear process is heightened and the conventions of discourse can both illuminate and obfuscate the realities of the environment for various groups' interests. These may be commercial - for instance the international 'mainstream' media's preference for dramatic or violent content, or in regards those who have an

³ Tristan McConnell, AFP, February 25, 2015, '*Firing squads, blast walls and dangerous diplomacy in Somalia*' <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/firing-squads-blast-walls-dangerous-diplomacy-somalia-051302579.html> (accessed June 28, 2016 – all subsequent online sources were accessed on this date, unless otherwise stated)

⁴ BBC, February 17, 2015, '*#BBCTrending: The Somali woman who's become a global star on Instagram*' <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-31462954>

⁵ Integration TV (Youtube), January 21, 2015 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WOT5jg4uLE>

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

economic motivation in portraying Muqdisho as being open for business. They may also be political, for instance manifested in critiques of negative news as an affront to nationalist pride, or in regards to Muqdisho's portrayal in contrast to other political centres in Somalia. This thesis does not take as its focus this largely internationalised mainstream/social media discursive battleground but instead engages with certain types of Somali-language texts made for local consumption. Nevertheless, the outline of these debates serves to introduce the multifaceted security, political and economic considerations faced and managed by news producers and political communicators in Muqdisho, as well as highlighting the power of contrasting narratives in the peculiar context of Somalia's capital city⁶.

1.2.2. Garoowe/Puntland: autonomy *sans* secession and the reconfiguration of the Somali state

Situated on the windswept plain of Nugaal region, Garoowe is the political capital of the Puntland State of Somalia, a quasi-autonomous administration formed on August 1, 1998 with the stated intention of integrating into a reconfigured and federal Somali state when the conditions to do so are deemed appropriate. Puntland currently represents the most fully formed, coherent and functional example of a Somali federal (regional) state without aspirations itself to sovereignty (Mosley 2015, 2). It enjoys a level of capacity to which other embryonic regional entities such as Jubaland, the Southwest State, the HirShabelle State or Galmudug currently aspire.

Garoowe is located at an important junction of the main north-south road artery that links Muqdisho and the south with Puntland's economic capital, the port city of Bosaaso. Here the road also branches off towards Laas Caanood and the regions of Sool and Sanaag, control over which Puntland disputes with Somaliland. Were conditions for road travel better – considering poor infrastructure, instability along the Shabelle River where the road turns south towards Muqdisho, and the hindrance of various checkpoints going into eastern Somaliland - then Garoowe would be at the centre of a busy overland transport network linking the north and south of Somalia. Even with these limitations, road transit along this axis does take place, particularly between Hiiraan and Galmudug linking these regions with markets, export opportunities and commodities in or from Bosaaso. Garoowe exhibits a more sleepy economic air than either the booming Hargeysa or the dynamic Muqdisho, but nonetheless remains an important point on this route, and is significant as the political capital of the under-studied Puntland governance project.

Since 1998 and its establishment as a political settlement between the mainly Majeerteen (Daarood) sub-clans who inhabit the northeast, the Puntland State of Somalia (*Dowladda Puntland ee Soomaaliya*) has developed many of the structures and institutions of statehood: a presidency, a unicameral legislature, judiciary, ministries of government, security forces. The latter include police

⁶ Esser's (2014) discussion of coverage of 'spectacular' violence in Kabul highlights the political salience of media discourses in an alternative post/on-going conflict context.

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

forces, intelligence agencies, custodial corps, and the ambiguously defined militia (not army, as that would imply a 'national' force), the *Darawiish*. Handovers of political power have been facilitated peacefully (i.e. the narrow defeat of incumbent President Cabdiraxmaan Maxamuud Faroole by the current President Cabdiweli Maxamed Cali Gaas in 2014) albeit indirectly through the votes of the legislature (the *Golaha Wakiilada*) as opposed to the popular suffrage put into practice in the Republic of Somaliland's elections.

The administrative lexicon of Puntland's 'statehood' is both significant and ambiguous. Indeed, it reflects many of the tensions which exist in the wider political climate over federal statehood and expressions of autonomy. In an introductory interview I conducted with Puntland's Minister of Information, Communication, Culture and Heritage (*Wasiirka Warfaafinta, Isgaarsiinta, Dhaqanka iyo Hiddaha*) in his Garoowe office, I stumbled over this territorial-political vocabulary⁷. Trying to frame a question on the scope of media coverage in Puntland in a geographical rather than political context I made reference to '*Gobolka Puntland*' (the Puntland Region). I realised my mistake, on one level, as soon as the words left my mouth and before the Minister's ears almost visibly pricked up: if I was going to aim for a spatial definition of the territory I should, of course, have pluralised region (*Goboladda*) to more accurately account for the fact that the Puntland territory is officially composed of 8 regions. This is complicated by the fact that these regions - partly an administrative legacy of the colonial era and the post-independence state, as well as being adapted by Puntland post 1998 - include parts of Sanaag, Sool and Cayn which are disputed with Somaliland. Consider also the status of Mudug region, half of which is controlled by Puntland (the dividing line - based on clan demographics - runs through the city of Gaalkacyo) but which is also a bone of serious contention in the creation of the federal state of 'Galmudug'. This amalgamation of Galgaduud and Mudug regions, is being facilitated by the (ambiguous) Provisional Constitution which mandates that only whole regions can come together to form a new federal state.

Although this is indicative of the complexities and fluidities of the wider Somali state reconfiguration process, this wasn't what prompted the Minister to interject. He was instead more concerned to clarify that the political entity we were going to talk about should be referred to as the Government of Puntland (or 'state', depending on how one reads the ambiguous, Arabic derived-term *Dowlad*). Given his role and our location in an office of governance, it is understandable that his conception of Puntland was that of a political entity, more so than a geographical one. Perhaps this is inevitable in a reality where state power blurs at the edges, between formal administrative boundaries which predate current arrangements of political influence. Most news media in Muqdisho or Hargeysa would instead refer to '*Maamuulka Puntland*' (the Puntland 'administration') implying a regional structure of less autonomy than Puntland actually enjoys in practice, and supposedly subordinate to a

⁷ Interview, Min. Cabdiweli Xirsi Cabdulle 'Indhaguran', Garoowe, February 28, 2015.

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

central power. For commentators identifying with Somaliland, the central power would be part of that 'other country', Somalia.

This anecdote not only gives some introductory context on the peculiar political status of Puntland, but also highlights the centrality of political vocabulary to the argument advanced by this thesis: namely that the particular political and technological circumstances of information transition across the Somali territories has created a discursive environment in which multiple bases of statehood and political authority can overlap and coexist, as well as shape the emerging form of (a) reconfigured Somali state(s). As the focus of much scholarship on the state in Africa shifts towards borderlands (Coplan 2010; Zeller 2013; Hoehne 2015) it should not be forgotten that there remain certain contexts where the tensions, ambiguities and objectives of political discourse are active in *centres* of power and continue to play a role in the articulation and reformation of political imaginaries of statehood.

Comparing the contrasting orientations of Puntland and Somaliland towards the Somali state in the post-1991 period requires an examination of certain historical factors which find expression and reinterpretation in the various news or commentary texts analysed in subsequent chapters. Colonial legacies are important, and can be understood in terms of the precedent for independence that was set for Somaliland by British decolonisation, its separate institutional context of statehood (Contini, 1969), as well as in the light of the centralising and southern-centric dynamic that was set in motion by the process of union between the two separate post-colonial entities in 1960. Perceptions of clan-based political agency during the period of Siyaad Barre's military dictatorship also play a role in understanding Puntland's current orientation to the Somali state. Standard conceptions both in the academic and popular literature of the power base of the Barre regime emphasise the importance of the so-called 'MOD' alliance between the Marexaan, Ogaadeen and Dulbahante sub-clans of the Daarood clan family. If the actuality of 'MOD' cohesion during the period can itself be questioned (Compagnon 1995), then it is also a mistake to conceive of the former regime as a specifically 'Daarood' entity, especially considering the militancy of certain Daarood sub-clans (notably the northeastern Majeerteen and 'their' SSDF movement) against the regime. The Majeerteen activists who mobilized against Barre – and who would eventually go on to form the nucleus of the Puntland state – provoked the regime in the 1980s into a level of counter-insurgency brutality (often against civilians) that echoed its better-documented campaign of repression in the northwest against the SNM and the predominantly Isaaq population there (Kapteijns 2012, 81).

The killing and displacement of a large proportion of Muqdisho's Daarood population as a result of targeted clan violence in the aftermath of state collapse must also be appreciated as a foundational moment for the later state of Puntland's political identity and position of ambiguous autonomy from developments in the southern capital. Nonetheless - and given the lack of a national truth and reconciliation process - how can one explain the northeast's post-1991 ostensible commitment of fidelity to a Somali state whose capital would remain Muqdisho, in contrast to the

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

SNM's declaration of independence for Somaliland in the northwest? One narrative that manifests itself in political commentary or prescriptive policy documents (Kirk 2011, 7) is the notion that the geographical dispersal of the various sub-clans of the Daarood (over a wider territory than the more territorially concentrated heartlands of the other major clan families) predisposes the Daarood to a greater commitment to Somali nationalism or even - given the Daarood populations spread out over Kenya and Ethiopia - pan-Somali irredentism and the 'Greater Somalia' dream. Such broad-brush conceptions of an over-arching ideological orientation of one clan family are seldom analytically helpful. Nevertheless, it is popularly perceived that political actors in Puntland are able and inclined to utilise relationships with other actors engaged in the wider federalisation process (particularly the Interim Jubaland Administration) which may, in part, be based upon a broad conception of Daarood solidarity. Along with a healthy dose of real-politick in the rough and tumble of the reconfiguration of the Somali state, such an alignment is often understood in terms of its opposition to the perceived 'Hawiye' control of Muqdisho (post 1991) and 'their' dominance in the central regions. Popular discursive mapping of clan-political dynamics is explored and problematised in detail in Chapter six with reference to alleged agendas of different group constructs in the context of the 'federal' reconfiguration of Somalia.

Also crucial to conceptions of Puntland's political identity (both in terms of self-presentation and external perception) is the status of its foreign relations with external powers seeking to influence the Somali political or security environment. The fact that the Puntland administration has positioned itself (or has been positioned) on a key front line in the conflicts against both AS as well as maritime piracy, has undoubtedly had a major impact upon its ability to garner international support, particularly in security related sectors. Not only have state security organs such as the Puntland Intelligence Services (PIS) or the Puntland Maritime Police Forces (PMPF) received training and support from international 'partners', but Puntland forces conduct (little reported) joint operations with US Forces on the ground in the Galgala hills. This mountainous area is adjacent to Puntland's economic capital, the port city of Bosaaso, and has provided a haven for AS or AS-affiliated elements particularly in the wake of the group's loss of territory further south.

Beyond the security sector, it has become clear that the Puntland administration has established itself as an authority which *beesha caalamka* (the 'international community') is willing to deal with directly. A relevant example of this is the Italian Government's recent direct support and funding of Puntland TV, the 'state' broadcaster based in Garoowe⁸. The external empowerment of regional political structures through communication technology support will be discussed below in relation to the wider Somalia media context, but suffice to say that this serves as an example for the truly 'international' relations of what is a (juridically speaking) a non-state entity. These 'international' relations – often epitomised by the President of Puntland's jet-setting around the region

⁸ Interview, Director of PLTV, Cabdifataax Askar, Garoowe, March 3, 2015

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

for talks with external powers – often pique the political sensitivities of commentators (in Muqdisho, for example) who decry the proliferation of regional ‘presidents’ drawing power away from the centre. They argue that such political agency compromises the sovereign integrity of the Somali state and plays into certain regional powers’ intention to divide and rule Somalia as a ‘federated’ collection of proxy states. This discursive construction around authorities such as Puntland (and the counter-narrative they provide) will be a major topic in subsequent discussions of expressions of nationalism. Once again, the vocabularies of these debates – the political lexicon of statelessness, ambiguous authority, state reconfiguration – are of importance to imaginations of power and legitimate authority across Somalia, and facilitate a huge range of arguments appealing to multiple ‘Somali’ audiences.

1.2.3. Hargeysa/The Republic of Somaliland: development, recognition and the ‘other Somalia’ narrative.

While twenty years of *de facto* independence may not have brought international diplomatic recognition for the Republic of Somaliland, they have facilitated the development of new forms of political organisation and nationhood in the northwestern part of what is (still) demarcated as ‘Somalia’ on maps of the Horn of Africa. Cartographic fictions aside, Somaliland has emerged as a polity which passes what Bryden refers to as the ‘banana test’ of sovereignty (2003) – if it looks, taste and smells like a state, then it probably is one – and political development in the territory has produced distinctive institutional frameworks for governance (Renders 2007) and relatively democratic and peaceful transitions of executive power. The emergence of Somaliland as an independent actor nonetheless remains a highly controversial project both within the region and in certain parts of the territory itself. It is not the purpose of this introductory overview to make comment on the ‘legitimacy’ of Somaliland’s independence claim. Instead, this discussion sets the scene for the subsequent exploration of the ways in which narratives and counter-narratives of nationalism, self-determination and the geopolitics of the region are deployed and how they influence popular conceptualisations of nationhood in the Somali Horn. The very fact that certain discourses may be marginalised or excluded from the public sphere in Hargeysa is in itself part of this process and needs to be kept in mind throughout the commentary on events taking place in this capital city. Somaliland provides an example of a ‘post-post’-independence political project in that a significant reconfiguration of sovereignty has taken place after the earlier experiment of broader Somali statehood. This rupture, or ‘re-independence’, has occurred in an international context very different from that which fostered the creation of a sovereign and unified Somalia in the 1960s.

What makes Somaliland’s case for secession distinct from many other independence movements is the fact that the territory enjoyed a brief spell of internationally-recognised sovereignty in 1960, between the exit of British power from the protectorate and its subsequent union with the ex-Italian territory of southern Somalia (Bryden 2003, 342). Whilst this independence lasted a mere five days, it followed an experience of British influence (and boundary definition) which left a distinct

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

northern political identity, conditioned in part, by one of the most indirect of indirect rules in the British Empire. Today, Somalilanders are often eager to point out to the otherwise ill-informed that their nation was never 'colonised' - the distinct notion of 'protectorate' being a feature of newly energised nationalist history.

The relatively hands-off approach of the British to the Somaliland protectorate does not imply that imperial power did not have profound and far-reaching effects on the territory. It was from the north that the most organised and fierce resistance to foreign rule in the Somali Horn emerged in the form of the so-called 'Mad Mullah' Maxamed Cabdullah Xassan's Darawiish army, which took on the British and their Ethiopian and local allies for two decades from 1900 (Sheik Abdi 1993). Said Sheikh Samatar (1982) highlights the poetic component of the Sayyid's proto-nationalist anti-colonial mobilisation and combat, illustrating the almost visceral impact of the war of words between the Darawiish and those clans seen as collaborators with the British.

Although Abdi Ismail Samatar (1989) details how British colonialism had a significant impact upon processes of rural sedentarization and the incorporation of 'traditional' elders into the political matrix of imperial-protectorate administration, it is nonetheless true that in terms of societal penetration British rule differed from the strategies of the Italians in the south. Settler colonialism and the development of export-orientated cash-crop industries brought about dramatic changes in land tenure in parts of south-central Somalia and set the context for expropriations by Siyaad Barre's regime and ongoing conflict over valuable land-based assets in the post-state collapse period (Marchal 1997, Webersik 2005). Although Somaliland's post 1991 development has not remained entirely free of violent contestation, especially during its early phases (Balthasar 2013), the predominance of the pastoral livestock trade and the remittance economy (as opposed to large scale agriculture or state-rent seeking) has created a setting in which certain segments of the merchant class have been able to gain control of or create state institutions which would ensure a certain degree of security for these sectors to develop (De Waal 2007, 1).

Somaliland's nationalist narrative draws heavily from the story of the SNM's increasingly audacious resistance to the Barre regime in the 1980s and the counter-insurgency that this provoked. This culminated in 1988 with extensive aerial bombardment which razed most of Hargeysa to the ground and expelled the vast majority of residents as refugees from the carnage (Adam 1995, 74). With the collapse of the regime in Muqdisho, the SNM in the north formed the political nucleus of the unilateral declaration of Somaliland's independence. Articulated another way, this was a renouncement of the union between the former colonial territories of northern and southern Somalia signed in 1960. The history of northern clan negotiations, the declaration of independence and subsequent conflict and reconciliation is dealt with by Bradbury (2008). State formation since the mid 1990s in Somaliland has taken place simultaneously with the systematic and extensive reconstruction and expansion of its 'national' capital, Hargeysa. Lacking international recognition, this process has largely been driven through the returning of refugees and finance sourced from the global Somali

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

diaspora, and the remittance economy (Ahmed 2000). Although Somaliland has not had access to (or been spared from) the external finance and political interference that have characterised the ‘international community’s’ engagement with the internationally recognised government in Muqdisho, it *has* been a recipient of significant amounts of aid - albeit often channelled through civil society organisations and UN agencies (Phillips 2013, 29). Nevertheless, the primary impetus for reconstruction and development has come from free-market entrepreneurship in Hargeysa and the re-development of the international livestock trade. As such, narratives of Somaliland’s self-sufficient state building are often vocalised in the Hargeysa public sphere.

The city today, whilst still physically and psychologically bearing some of the scars of its past destruction, is a dynamic regional hub of commerce, trade and communications. The remittance economy remains an important source of income and capital, and ties Hargeysa into various international markets and communities. Hargeysa (like much of the rest of urban Somalia/Somaliland) boasts a relatively advanced commercial telecommunications sector, and higher education institutions, often financed by diaspora returnees, are growing rapidly. At the same time, Hargeysa struggles from infrastructural deficiencies (roads, public services and healthcare delivery) and high rates of youth unemployment. The institutions and ministries of the Somaliland state project are physically based in Hargeysa, and local law enforcement and judicial mechanisms function. Politically too, Hargeysa is the centre of gravity for the Republic of Somaliland and is home to the various branches of government including the Presidency, the Lower and Upper Houses of the legislature as well as the National Electoral Commission which oversees the tri-partite electoral system.

The functioning of democratic elections in Somaliland is a key facet of the unrecognized Republic’s narrative of legitimacy: not only do elections allocate power within Somaliland but they play a role in defining the polity vis-à-vis the ‘other Somalia’ which remains mired in ongoing conflict. This ‘nationalist’ function of Somaliland’s elections was on display in the Republic’s last Presidential contest, which I witnessed in 2010 while living in Hargeysa. June 26 is an auspicious date for Somalilanders and constitutes one of the territory’s two days of ‘independence’, the other being May 18th, the date in 1991 on which Somaliland declared its secession from Somalia. June 26th 2010 marked 50 years of independence from British rule over the Somaliland Protectorate and was deliberately chosen as the date for Somaliland’s second presidential election - originally scheduled in 2008 but repeatedly delayed due to political infighting and serious irregularities in voter registration. This constituted an important day for Somaliland, and came loaded with meaning for a territory asserting its nationalism in a context of democratic stability.

Somaliland’s constitution mandates a tri-partite competitive electoral system and is designed this way to prevent unlimited party fragmentation along clan/sub-clan lines. In popular political discourse it is widely feared that this is what would happen without strict limits placed on the number of parties allowed to compete. The 2010 campaign was fought out between the UDUB party (*Ururka Dimuqraadiga Ummadda Bahawday* The United People’s Democratic Party) of the then incumbent

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

President Dahir Rayaale Kaahin, the KULMIYE (Unity) Party of the eventual winner Axmed Maxamed Maxamood Silaanyo, and Faysal Cali Waraabe's *Ururka Caddaalada iyo Daryeelka* (UCID, The Justice and Welfare Party). In the weeks leading up to the election, the three parties mobilised their supporters for campaigning around Somaliland, a process characterised in Hargeysa by numerous rallies and motorised processions blasting through the streets. The parties were allocated alternate days for campaigning in order to minimise risks of confrontation between opposing groups, and the run-up to the election was characterised by a carnival-like atmosphere of marches and motorcades.

In contrast to the movement and vibrancy of the preceding weeks, election day itself was governed in such a way as to facilitate orderly conduct and calm on the streets of Hargeysa. A private vehicle ban prevented large scale inner or inter-city movement of voters to multiple polling stations and restrict any kind of partisan campaigning on the day itself. Successful in this regard, the restrictions gave the city an uncharacteristic atmosphere of quiet tension. Queuing at polling stations was largely well-managed with people appearing genuinely enthusiastic and positive during the process, often eager to be photographed with their registration cards and indelibly marked fingers indicating they had cast their vote. The election constituted a major security operation for the state authorities and the spectre of violent disruption to the process loomed large. Hargeysa had suffered suicide-bombing attacks in 2008 by alleged AS-linked militants who ostensibly oppose Somaliland independence and retain elements of underground support in the northern territories. The state was required to perform its monopoly of the legitimate use of violence in order to facilitate a process on which it had staked much of its credibility as a viable and, indeed, legitimate secessionist political entity. The external ramifications of the electoral democratic process were not lost in the localised popular contestation over partisan politics. Public discourses of the legitimacy of the election reflecting the 'readiness' of Somaliland to join the international community as an independent member were frequently expressed to foreign observers. The performance of this election was conceptualised for many people not only in terms of local power struggles but also in relation to sovereignty articulated not through juridical right but normative (democratic) legitimacy. Here, 'post post-independence' political aspirations were tied to globalised norms and regimes of governance and democratic preference. Across Somaliland the election proceeded in a predominantly free and peace manner and produced a result deemed fair by international observers (Walls & Kibble/Progressio 2011). The election resulted in the peaceful transition of power to President Silaanyo who had gained 49.95% of the vote, with a national turnout at around 50% (*Ibid*, 35).

This vignette of democratic performance in Somaliland serves to illustrate the centrality of partisan competition in Hargeysa in the public spheres of political commentary, in contrast to the political contexts of Muqdisho and Garoowe where no comparable established party system operates. Understanding the role of elections in Somaliland, not only for the political stability of the territory, but also its nationalist self-image allows for appreciation of controversy that was generated in 2015

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

around disputes regarding the extension of President Silaanyo's mandate and the role of opposition parties, the upper house of the legislature (the *Guurti*), the National Electoral Commission, and Constitutional Court in this process. Officially taking into consideration technical limitations preventing a scheduled 2015 election, the *Guurti*, following a tri-partite agreement, has set the date for the next presidential poll in March 2017⁹.

1.3. Ethno-religious nationalism?

Given the markedly different political contexts of these three cities and the level of fragmentation of political authority across Somalia, in what sense is a focus on 'ethno-religious nationalism' an appropriate lens through which to comparatively study political identity and communication across the Somali territories? The following chapters draw from Benedict Anderson's oft-referenced conceptualisation of nationalism as the production of 'imagined communities' of citizens able to presuppose the existence of - and identify horizontally with - their unmet (and un-meetable) compatriots. Anderson emphasises the importance of the development of print-capitalism in the European historical experience, as well as the popular emergence of temporal conceptions of simultaneity in allowing for this process of 'imagining' the nation to take place (2006, 22). Anderson's nation is conjured up by its participants as being (1) 'limited' with 'finite, if elastic, boundaries beyond which lie other nations'; (2) a 'community' characterised by 'deep horizontal comradeship'; and (3) 'sovereign' with aspirations towards the normative values of freedom and independence (*Ibid*, 7).

The former two characteristics are explored implicitly in this thesis' analyses of different types of media texts, and I argue that examples of rhetorical appeals to solidarity amongst an ethnically, linguistically and religiously (if not geographically) bounded community are common tropes of political discourse and appeals to legitimacy. The political question of sovereignty, on the other hand, is far more difficult to discern amongst the myriad claims to authority which contest, interact and overlap across the Somali territories of the Horn. One of the cumulative conclusions of the subsequent chapters is that not only can an ethno-religious national community be imagined *across* political boundaries of sovereignty, but also that these notions of trans-nationalism and political fragmentation can become constitutive of the idea of that nation itself. A notion of divided sovereignty becomes popularly understood as an inescapable fact of Somali political identity and must be articulated and utilised by a wide range of actors. These actors imagine the eponymous 'Somali lands' in a variety of ways, each employing different conceptualisations of what it means to be a 'Somali'. This abstract 'ethnic' categorisation – which also engages a variety of religious, linguistic and 'cultural' signifiers - holds great political significance in its ability to include or exclude different groups across multiple settings.

⁹ This has been delayed again – by the ongoing drought – to late 2017.

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

Fundamental to this argument is the idea that fragmentation is popularly conceptualised from an all-encompassing local to global scale - whether amongst groups within the territory of 'Somalia/Somaliland', amongst the wider ethnically Somali territories of Ethiopia, Kenya or Djibouti, or in the global diaspora. The blurred distinctions here render a local/diasporic dichotomy analytically problematic and demonstrate how an ethno-religious identity can transcend state boundaries. This, I contend, represents in itself a popular response to extreme political fragmentation and here the media ecology of the Somali territories plays a crucial role. The public sphere (introduced theoretically below) is conceptualised in terms of what I describe as its dual character. On one level, public spheres of political commentary and debate exist around (and help create) localised political projects, such as those found in Muqdisho, Garoowe or Hargeysa. At the same time, these centres of production overlap and interact with a wider public sphere of externally produced media speaking to regional and global Somali-speaking audiences. It is this interaction, I argue, that shapes different opportunities for the deployment of ethno-religious political argumentation and imagination.

If, then, the basis of such identification is centred around ethnic, religious, linguistic and 'cultural' discourses, then what is the utility of the political concept of 'nationalism' for a study of this type? Nationalism remains a key component of the rhetoric of political actors themselves across Somalia, employing different combinations of these ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic tropes to respond to the particular circumstances and contradictions of Somali political statehoods. The reconstruction of the Somali state from the capital Muqdisho (and participated in by regional political actors such as Puntland, Jubaland *et al*) is framed in the historical context of remedying fragmented Somali political sovereignty, whether originally fractured by colonialism, post-independence exclusionary dictatorship, or the violence of the civil war. The concept of Somali ethnic, religious and linguistic homogeneity has been embedded in this project from its origins in anti-colonial mobilisation, a history which continues resonate across the modern public sphere in expressions of both support for state reconstruction and radical critiques of this process.

Post-colonial Somali state-building has been analysed in terms of this apparent relative homogeneity, at least when viewed in continental comparison. For Laitin and Samatar, for instance, there pre-existed a Somali 'nation in search of a state' (1987). Post-state collapse scholarship, on the other hand, has highlighted the disjuncture between such presentations of the nationalist ideal and complex realities of diversity amongst the regions and peoples of the Somali Horn. This, it is argued, has played a significant role in the deployment of colonial power, was exploited by the military state, and influenced trajectories civil-war violence (Ahmed 1995; Besteman & Cassanelli 2000; Kusow *et al.* 2004; Eno, Eno & Lehman 2010). As the subsequent chapters will elaborate, the notion of Somali ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic homogeneity is in itself a construct, deployed in different contexts to unite or exclude from power certain groups at certain political junctures. The fact that it is an imaginative construct is precisely what makes it politically important, and discursively identifiable in various forms of political, literary or religious commentary.

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

Conversely, imaginations of a ‘Somali’ nation remain crucial for the secessionist polity of Somaliland, as its very naming suggests. This constitutes a political project which rejects the classical pan-Somali nationalist discourse of regional unity, but requires the development of its own rhetorical repertoire of national symbols and mythology. These discourses of Somaliland nationalism generally avoid the explicit presentation of a particular or distinctive ‘northern’ identity as this could be seized upon by its opponents who decry the project as illegitimate in its alleged single clan-family focused composition. A civic nationalism based on a shared history of violence and struggle coexists in the Somaliland public sphere alongside discourses of wider Somali ethno-religious or cultural solidarity: the epitome of an imagined community that is divided (legitimately, in the Somalilander perspective) into multiple polities. This maintenance of a discourse emphasising both the ethnically-defined character of a ‘Somali’ polity alongside a secessionist claim to independence provides political actors with both novel opportunities and dilemmas, and these are explored in the subsequent chapters with reference to the cultural politics of wider Somali state contestation and media production.

While I utilise Anderson’s focus on the technological basis of imaginative nationalism, I also draw upon expansions and critiques of his account. Wedeen’s exploration of nationalism in Yemen (2008) has been instructive for attempts here to conceptualise Somali case studies. Yemen and the Somali Horn, physically separated by the Gulf of Aden, share numerous historical and cultural features: a history of colonial administration; territorial divisions and unifications; extremely limited state capacity; the development of Islamist ‘youth’ insurgencies; and the dubious honour of constituting another theatre in the United States’ ‘Global War on Terror’. Wedeen builds on Anderson’s notion of the imaginative content of nationalism and the technologies associated with the production of novel forms of horizontal territorial identifications, whilst problematising a basis of this theory - the idea that nationalism and secularization necessitate each other. For Wedeen this feature of Anderson’s argument demonstrates a lingering indebtedness to modernization theory (Wedeen 2008, 5) and she argues that what was contingent on a particular European history of developments of imagined national communities cannot be taken as a basis for generalizations about non-linear processes of identification and power politics in the post-colonial world.

Wedeen’s analysis of Yemeni case studies highlights the existence non-secular nationalisms which fuse discourses of piety with vocabularies of territorially designated sovereignty. In order to develop this theory Wedeen engages with a multiplicity of ‘mini-publics’ (including the media, the Mosque, the *qaat* chewing social settings – all of which relevant for Somali cases) which she characterises as the ‘substance of participatory politics’ in a context of semi-authoritarianism and a lack of formal mechanisms of suffrage. This focus then ‘explores how public sphere practices occasion the performance of an explicitly democratic ‘subjectivity’ (or presentation of the self) – one that relishes deliberation – without producing specifically liberal debates or forms of personhood’ (*Ibid*, 20). The development of the public sphere in Somaliland, for instance, demonstrates similar

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

processes, albeit with the additional contextual factor of functioning procedural democracy and the pressures of international non-recognition.

1.4. Habermas in the Horn? The Somali public sphere

Jürgen Habermas' foundational account of the 'public sphere' refers to the European development of a space of expression and debate which came to exist in urban bourgeois society, coinciding with the decline of the 'representational' culture of feudalism and the emergence of capitalist enterprise. This new '*Öffentlichkeit*' culture which emerged in different contexts in Europe from the end of the 18th Century was characterised by the development of print media and the expansion of public, non-state controlled spaces for exchange and discussion in which views and knowledge could be shared and reproduced, with 'rational-critical' dialogue creating new contexts and imaginations for political agency and ideology (Habermas 1991, 29). This classical conception of the public sphere is thus highly normative and – usually viewed contemporaneously with the emergence of 'civil society' – emphasises the importance of space for popular debate as a prerequisite for the eventual rise of democratic modes of governance. For Habermas, this highly important (and idealised) period would ultimately last only for a short time before its decay was brought on by the growth of commercial mass media and the transformation of individuals in later stages of capitalism from citizens into consumers or clients of state services. Habermas' work has been subject to numerous critiques and reformulations but regardless of the limitations of his class-specific (bourgeois) and gendered (male) conceptualization of this epoch (Siltanen & Stanworth 1984), the value of his original formulation on the influence of this space of discourse and agency has often been built upon rather than jettisoned by his critics (Crossley & Roberts 2004, 10; Meyer & Moors 2006; Salvatore & Schmidtke 2013).

The physical and political conditions of the public sphere in the three research sites of Muqdisho, Garoowe and Hargeysa vary greatly in terms of security concerns constraining free association and public expression, and in regards to the prevalence of print media. While these environments of media production, dissemination and reproduction are fully outlined in Chapter three, I note here that in each political centre a level of economic development, access to communications technology, media activity and (elite) public discourse exists for the realm of the public sphere to facilitate substantive debate around political norms. The invocation of Habermas's public sphere terminology in these differing contexts is not to testify to some process of bourgeois capitalist revolution analogous to European social or economic change between the 18th and 19th centuries. Instead it asserts the importance of networks and forums of media within a rapidly changing political, social and economic environment in which discourses of morality, imaginations of the political, and highly important definitions and distinctions between the 'public' and the 'private' are being constantly remade and redeployed. The content that is transmitted through these networks is clearly important, but so are the conventions followed, the innovations made, and the forms of media or artistic expression energised.

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

Consideration of ‘Africanist’ or ‘Southern’ critiques (De Sousa Santos, 2013) of public sphere theories helps to clarify the particular way in which the concept is applied in this thesis. Willems (2013) points out that the public sphere is often inextricably linked to the notion of civil society, but has tended to escape the type of critical scrutiny that has been levelled against the latter in the field of African studies for its apparent Euro-centric historical/normative bias. She asserts that the relatively limited critical scholarship on the public sphere has tended to blur categorisations, and cites Ekeh’s (1975) contention that the Western experience of a unified public sphere (which the state and civil society both occupy) is not reflective of African social spaces where distinction between ‘primordial’ and ‘civic’ publics is evident. She argues that this, whilst an important attempt to theorise a public sphere in an African context, is also an example of a tendency towards conceptual conflation (Willems, 2013, 7).

Calhoun (1993) outlines the different connotations of civil society and the public sphere where the latter refers to a discursive space of public deliberation and the former implies some form of political organisation. Often civil society is identified by virtue of existing outside the state whereas the public sphere is defined in opposition to a private sphere. For Calhoun (and Willems) the public sphere partially overlaps with the state and civil society, constituting a sphere where both the state and civil society articulate their interests (*Ibid*, 267; Willems 2013, 6). Calhoun identifies one of the most significant obstacles to the application of public sphere theory in non-Western contexts with regard to Habermas’ treatment of ‘identity politics’ as falling outside of the arena of ‘rational critical’ debate. For Calhoun, ‘Identity formation needs thus to be approached as part of the process of public life, not something that can be fully settled prior to it in a private sphere’ (1993, 279). He argues that the liberal model of the public sphere needs re-examination and notes how ‘even the very identity of the political community is a product, not simply a precondition, of the activity of the public sphere of civil society’ (*Ibid*, 280). This critique recognises the unanticipated resilience of modern forms of nationalism in the post-Cold War era, flourishing alongside (not in spite of) expanding processes of globalisation. Here the privileged notion of actors entering into a public sphere with pre-defined identities, equipped to engage in dialogue whose outcome depends solely on the rational merits of argumentation, appears either as an abstraction derived from a highly specific historical context of European capitalist development, or as an unrealistic assessment of the actual dynamics of the classic ‘coffee-house’ model itself.

There are different ways to respond to this apparent theoretical blind-spot, one of which has been highlighted above in Wedeen’s conceptualisation of ‘mini-publics’ in Yemen. These, she argues, facilitate the emergence of what she describes as non-liberal democratic subjectivities through deliberative spaces. Another response seen more clearly in the Africanist literature involves jettisoning the public-sphere label altogether, and replacing it with the concept of ‘popular culture’, which, for Barber, is characterised by the arts as a channel for public communications (1997, 2). This approach is applauded by Willems who notes that ‘an advantage of conceptualising sites of popular

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

culture as publics is that it avoids Habermas' elitist connotation of his concept of the public sphere – popular culture often engages, interacts and responds to official debates' (2013, 7). The problem with this conceptualisation of popular culture as a site of discourse for the subsequent Somali case studies is that it appears to emphasise a dichotomy between 'official' (state) and 'unofficial' (popular) debates - a distinction in the context of Somali media that is highly blurred and seldom clearly identifiable. Chapter three outlines the networks and individuals behind news media production and highlights the diversity of producers, the dominance of the private sector and the dynamic contestation between multiple actors attempting to establish themselves as 'official' spokespeople for various political, social or religious projects.

Also drawing from Anderson, Barber defines a 'public' as an 'audience whose members are not known to the speaker/composer of the text, and not necessarily present, but still addressed simultaneously, and imagined as a collectivity' (2007, 139). Here she emphasises that new forms and tools of public textual meaning making also depend on conventions of earlier genres, and highlights the collaboration between textual producers and audiences: 'what we see... is not an appeal to shared cultural knowledge as a given, fixed characteristic of an ethnic population – but rather an active and collaborative project of *constructing* shared knowledge in the very act of alluding to it as if it were already in place' (*Ibid*, 167). Given the historical and modern tensions around the definition and boundary-setting of the Somali 'nation', my subsequent textual analyses attempt to address the ways in which a transnational media ecology helps facilitate this very process, and the implications of changing technologies and forms of 'entextualisation' of discourse.

Hunter's (2015) exploration of the public sphere through newspaper culture in pre and post-colonial Tanzania also illustrates a blurring of these boundaries between official and popular discourse. Here the ideological dynamism of the period, whereby fundamental terminologies of political change (freedom, rights, equality) were all up for debate, was mediated through the particular conventions of public letter-writing to various Swahili-language newspapers. These circuits of political communication were themselves products of the development of the capitalist economy and had their own built-in barriers to participation or access (class, gender, urban bias). Similarly, the importance of the technological mediation of discourses of politics is summarised by Barber in her analysis of Frederiksen's discussion of the Kikuyu press in contemporaneous Kenya:

'What [Frederiksen's account] suggests is that the local press's mode of constituting an imagined community depended not so much on its simultaneity and uniformity [Anderson], as on its hybrid, porous and responsive character' (2006, 15).

The above critiques and developments of public sphere theory in non-European contexts all illustrate the difficulties that arise from the normative connotations of the terminology, particularly the notion that public-sphere/civil society interaction are a starting block from which liberal-democratisation processes can advance. Appadurai and Breckenridge have thus suggested:

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

‘[a loosening of] the link between the word public and the history of civil society in Europe... [and argue] that it be used to refer to a set of arenas that have emerged in a variety of historical conditions and that articulate the space between domestic life and the projects of the nation-state – where different social groups (classes, ethnic groups, genders) constitute their identities by their experience of mass-mediated forms in relation to the practices of everyday life’ (1995, 4).

For Appadurai and Breckenridge this usage severs any predetermined relationship to ‘formal’ politics or ‘rational communicative action’ and instead helps describe ‘an arena of cultural contestation in which modernity can become a diversely appropriated experience’ (*Ibid*).

From another perspective, it could be argued that whatever ephemera are produced in the ether of the ‘public sphere’ (however eloquently conceptualised), this actually has very little influence on the actual workings of political power exercised in political arena defined by money and the means of violence. Alex De Waal’s recent intervention on the ‘real politics’ of the Horn of Africa (2015) can be read to both downplay the significance of the public sphere, but also open up new perspectives on the position of popular discourse and political communications. De Waal visualises the politics of the Horn as a ‘forest of trees’, each one representative of a political centre of patronage; spread out to varying degrees and often crossing borders. He highlights the material logics of bargaining for rents in a dynamic political marketplace and shows how the changing technological or communicative basis of its operation increase competition and drive up the price of loyalty, therefore facilitating and incentivising more entrants into rent-seeking rebellion cycles. Pervasive low-intensity violence is not the indication of the failure of this system, but rather a central component of it, serving as a means of bargaining and indicating actors’ intentions and capabilities within the marketplace. Mineral and hydrocarbon revenues are important sites of conflict and constitute spoils to be distributed, while illicit transnational finance, the global arms trade and ‘Global War on Terror’ security patronage from the West all play crucial roles for transactions in the marketplace and maintaining the all important ‘political-budgets’ of power holders.

This pointedly materialistic account of the ‘real’ workings of elite power does attempt to engage with the identities, ideas and imaginations of politics in the contemporary Horn. De Waal considers the technological and ideological context of the public sphere in the region and notes the increased detachment between this arena of popular debate and the circuitry of communication amongst the elites who operate within the marketplaces of patronage. De Waal emphasises the point that advances in communications technology have made a huge impact on processes of political bargaining (connectivity increases the number of potential entrants, makes closed-door negotiations impossible), while popular access to diversified media and the networks of new transnational elites raise possibilities for nascent localized public spheres of debate and dissent. However, such optimism is tempered by the fact that national concentrations of intellectual energy in centralized higher education institutions is a thing of the past, and the politics of ‘ideas’ only becomes viable for those niche nodes of populist religious dissent. Nationalism and political ideology barely factor into the

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

equation and these, I argue, are areas which require further reflection. To what extent are radical challenges to existing power holders able to call on past narratives of nationhood in the Horn context to broaden their appeal? To what extent do new avenues for decentralized politico-religious communication facilitate resilient insurgencies that have the capacity to derail the political ‘stabilization’ efforts perceived by so many to be externally driven? The development of AS’s broad and cross-clan militant network, its continued ability to soak up intense foreign and domestic military pressure, and the regionalisation - or even internationalisation - of its ‘Jihad’ is an instructive case in point. In a different context, one might productively enquire as to the circumstances and implications of national identity creation within a ‘well-regulated’ political marketplace such as Somaliland (an example given by De Waal)? In this case, the development of such a mythology has been a component of the process he has described, and may well play a role in the maintenance of this order, particularly if the current circumstances of Somaliland’s unrecognised international sovereignty were to change.

1.5. Thesis structure

Chapter two continues this discussion with a problematisation of ‘cultural’ interpretations of nationalist contestation. The chapter reflects on the methodological choices that have been made in the subsequent selection of different ‘types’ of modern Somali-language media texts for analysis. Their apparent novelty and importance are contextualised and linked to the wider argument advanced on the relationship between the technological development of media production and the varying deployments of ethno-religious nationalist rhetoric. This chapter also engages in a discussion of the recent *#Cadaanstudies* controversy, an academic-activist movement challenging the ‘whiteness’ of knowledge production on Somalia. Using this to foreground my own reflexivity, the chapter argues that aspects of this campaign are themselves indicative of (and overlap with) other contemporary struggles over the narrative politics of Somali nation statehoods, playing out in the contemporary public sphere.

Chapter three provides a detailed comparative analysis of the technological, socio-political and security contexts of media across Somalia and Somaliland. The chapter gives an overview of media production in terms of content, networks of producers and audience consumption. Explored here are the role of journalists and different forms of media production in processes of state reconstruction or political reconfiguration of a federal Somalia. Communications by ‘state’ entities (and their capacity to control information flows) are comparatively analysed in relation to the producers of the texts that are presented in the following chapters. This chapter argues that the transnational orientation of the Somali news media, as well as its commercial context, influence the production and reception of content.

The following three chapters each analyse particular types of modern media texts which are produced in and circulate through the wider Somali public sphere. The multiple producers of each of

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

these types of media often consider themselves to be ‘nationalists’. Nevertheless, their work constructs this Somali nation in varying cultural, religious, political or genealogical terms, hinting at the inclusion or exclusion of different groups, and the influence of the ‘external’ forces. Analysis of these texts highlights certain continuities with the broader history of discursive post-colonial nation-state building introduced above, whilst also demonstrating the impact of a dramatically altered modern media ecology in facilitating new ways of imagining a nation and ‘Somali’ states. As such, Chapter four engages with many of the discursive tropes presented in this introduction (political reconfiguration, ethno-religious nationalism, clan) through an extended analysis of the work of Amin Amir, a diaspora-based cartoonist whose work is widely circulated through online and print news media in Somalia. Whilst it may seem counterintuitive to begin textual analysis with material produced outside of Somalia, the chapter argues that it is the artist’s very detachment from the physical context which allows him to make comments which engage receptive audiences across the different political environments introduced above. This analysis is also punctuated with ‘local’ texts which illustrate the salience of his renderings of politics to opinion-makers who may be physically present in the environments. This chapter proposes a lens of analysis of Somali media which emphasises the transnational, or, more precisely, collapses distinctions between ‘local’ and ‘diasporic’ nodes of production for discourses of Somali ethno-religious nationalism. This chapter considers the theoretical contributions of literature on popular geopolitics and transnational public spheres, problematising emphasis on ‘resistance’ in recent work on African ‘civic agency’.

Chapter five explores a second type of modern media text: pro-AS online propaganda text and videos. This serves as a vehicle to examine the role of Islam (or Islamism) in nationalist political argumentation in contemporary Somalia. The chapter does not conflate these ‘radical’, oppositional narratives with broader histories of Islamist activism, organisation or socio-religious change in Somalia (indeed, it argues that a dichotomous conception of religious/secular contestation in Somalia is fundamentally misleading), but rather interrogates the ways in this material discursively overlaps with other features of political debate across Somali public spheres. This propaganda works explicitly through the language of non-liberal, anti-imperialist resistance to local and international power-holders, but is itself positioned within global frameworks of religio-political mobilisation and ideological conflict. This type of media production is representative of emerging imaginations of normative Somali statehood appealing to certain segments of the population within Somalia and beyond. This discussion also draws on recent theorisations of the relationship between mass religious communication and the technologies of the public sphere, and evaluates the relevance of the Somali case for such debates.

Chapter six focuses on a third type of media text that circulates in the wider Somali public sphere: print or online opinion pieces. Texts analysed in this chapter either emanate from or directly comment on the three political centres of Muqdisho, Garoowe and Hargeysa. They are all written in the post 2012 period and explicitly engage – in different ways – with the division of Somalia along

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

federal, regional and ‘clan’ lines. This type of ‘non-prestigious’ polemic writing is contextualised with reference to the historical development of the wider modern media environment, and the literary canon of ‘prestigious’ composition. Following Barber, the analysis looks at what these texts *say*, *do* and *are* (2007, 200) in this specific transnational media ecology. In exploring the different ways in which commentary on ‘division’ is performed in the public sphere the chapter attempts to illustrate some of the ‘the contexts in which clanship gains specific meanings and show what is “rolled into” clan at any specific moment’ (Kapteijns 2004, 4). Given the ubiquity of discourses and critiques of ‘clanism’ in this type of commentary, the chapter argues that - almost paradoxically - narratives of this division may themselves contribute to the maintenance of the idea of the Somali ethno-nation.

The concluding chapter ties together the arguments put forward by the preceding media case studies: namely, an emphasis on the value of a transnational conceptualisation of a global Somali public sphere; and the notion that the enduring discursive importance of ethno-religious nationalist argumentation is created *in* the technological media environment of political fragmentation, as opposed to running contrary to it. The conclusion argues that the emergence of a supra-national public sphere influences imaginations of what the ‘Somali lands’ have been, what they are, and what they can be. This constitutes a dialectical process whereby narratives of conflict perpetuate political fragmentation, while simultaneously reinforcing particular conceptions of shared ethno-cultural-religious identity. Even if Somali ethno-nationalism is inherently contested (Kusow *et al.* 2004), an ‘invention’ (Ahmed *et al.* 1995), a ‘myth’ (Hesse 2010), or has been ‘elusive’ from the outset (Balthasar 2014), its contemporary manifestations in the public sphere should not be overlooked as they represent extremely malleable and adaptive discursive tools which are and can be used in the politics of resistance, authority construction and exclusion across the Somali territories. If previous accounts have framed a contested or fictive nationalism as an *explanation* for state ‘failure’, then this analysis attempts to flip the lens to interrogate how political fragmentation and the modern trajectories of conflict have affected the tenor of nationalist discourses in Somalia and the multiple political possibilities they facilitate.

1. Introduction: Imagining the Somali lands

2. *Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: 'grounding' a media methodology*

2.1. Introduction

'Can the Somali speak?' was the question was posed by young Somali-identifying academic activists in the context of the *#Cadaanstudies* movement that engulfed the field of Somali scholarship in 2015¹. Echoing Spivak's famous discussion of the 'subaltern' voice (1988), and inverting the focus from the study of the 'Somali' to critical analysis of the 'whiteness' of structures of knowledge production, the 'hash-tag' encapsulated the numerous legitimate grievances of those who feel that this particular field of area studies is dominated by external narratives, an agenda of securitisation, and shoddy, detached scholarship. The campaign, driven largely through social media commentary and debate, has penetrated into both popular and academic discourse on post-colonialism and scholarly power imbalances. It also coincided with my period of fieldwork in Somalia.

As a western, white, male scholar producing knowledge on Somalia, *#Cadaanstudies* provides a timely intervention around which I structure this methodological chapter of my thesis, and I foreground here important questions surrounding reflexivity, power dynamics of research, and the mediation of Somali voices. I argue that *#Cadaanstudies* – as a debate and as a form of narrative politics itself – reflects wider discourses within the transnational 'Somali' public sphere addressing nationalism, political fragmentation, external intervention and the 'cultural' identity of authority in contexts of state reconstruction or reconfiguration.

This chapter discusses the apparent 'exceptionalism' of Somali case studies with specific reference to the research methods that have been employed, adjusted and reflected upon in the development of this project. These include comparative critical discourse analysis of certain types of Somali language media texts from across the Somali territories, semi-structured interviews with media professionals, ethnographic observation in public sphere sites, and survey and focus group data collection with a young generation of news media consumers. I unpack this methodology in the context of *#Cadaanstudies* in order to address the potentials and pitfalls of attempting to balance an appreciation of the particularities of the research environment in the Somali Horn of Africa with a desire to make broader theoretical claims about ideas of nationalism and the 21st Century parameters of public sphere communication.

The thesis has posed three central questions. The first of which asks as to why discourses of ethno-nationalism remain important in the public spheres of an intensely fragmented Somalia. The second addresses the extent to which the particular environment of media development, technology

¹ Safia Aidid, March 30, 2015, 'Can the Somali Speak, *#Cadaanstudies*', <http://africasacountry.com/2015/03/can-the-somali-speak-cadaanstudies/>

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: ‘grounding’ a media methodology

and current production influences the way in which these discourses are reproduced and disseminated. The third enquires as to the relationship between the political language of news media (in the contexts of statelessness or state reconstruction) and the potential ideological and socio-cultural underpinnings of a reconfigured Somali nation state/states. In putting forward answers to these questions my analysis looks not to the embedded features of some externally conceived idea of ‘Somali culture’ or a reified and monolithic ‘Somali identity’, but instead takes into consideration – and, crucially, takes seriously – the utilisation of these notions in the conventions and rhetoric of media texts and political commentary in different public spheres across Somalia.

To give an initial example of this approach let me introduce here one of the perennial tropes of Somali studies – the influence of ‘clan’ in politics. The clan or ‘tribal’ division of both the political territory of Somalia and the ethnic group in the Horn of Africa that identifies as ‘Somali’, is as ubiquitous in the academic literature of Somali society and politics as it is contested – on, broadly, a ‘primordialist’ versus modernist or materialist axis. If the language of ‘clan’ is visible in scholarly debate then what does it actually look like written on the pages of Somali public sphere news media and political commentary? As each of my subsequent analyses of types of media text illustrate (from political cartoons to Islamist propaganda to prose opinion pieces) it most certainly features: as a ‘thing’ in popular discourse, discussed as an explanatory factor of Somali politics, or critiqued as the malign influence of ‘tribalism’. What words are used? Which are not? Where do the acceptable boundaries of designation, definition or argumentation lie? How does this language create something which in one sense can be seen as a unifying ‘cultural’ marker (the notion that Somali society is divided by ‘clan’), but at the same time is decried as the ultimate barrier to political unity of an ethnic, religious or geographically ‘imagined’ community? This chapter proceeds with a discussion of the pitfalls of essentialism inherent in a ‘cultural’ approach to the study of political communication and ethno-religious nationalism across Somalia. This is followed by a reflection on my personal, professional and academic experiences in Somaliland/Somalia since 2009 and their influence on the specific methodology employed throughout the thesis. The different methods are then elaborated on: critical discourse analysis of particular types of media texts; elite interviews; and data collection through focus groups and surveys with university students. The practical and ethical considerations, constraints and opportunities of this research methodology are discussed, and the chapter concludes with comment on the relationship noted above between critiques of external knowledge production on Somalia and the narrative-politics of the Somali public sphere itself.

2.2. Essentialism, exceptionalism and the ‘culture’ question

It would perhaps have made sense to introduce this thesis by making reference to some inherent importance of news transmission within Somali society. This could have served as a historical link to the value of information dissemination across a nomadic pastoralist society, characterised by mobility and fluidity of people’s orientation towards productive resources such as pasture or watering points

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: ‘grounding’ a media methodology

for livestock; or in terms of shifting patterns of alliance or contestation in a system defined by patrilineal descent networks of clan. To succinctly illustrate this cultural continuity – a progression from ‘tradition’ to ‘modernity’, it may have been appropriate to have noted that a common greeting (the ‘how are you today?’ of both the quintessential nomad and contemporary Somali urbanite) takes the form of ‘*iska warran?*’ translating literally to ‘give news [of yourself]’. One could have extrapolated from the prevalence of this linguistic construction in everyday discourse (*Maxamed ka warran?* How is Maxamed? or *Ka warrama sidaan ugu dadaalnay nabadda Soomaaliya?*² What do you think about how we have struggled for peace in Somalia?) the notion that *war* (news or information) and the act of giving it transcends the simple idea of reporting events but instead encompasses a wider sense of being or a condition in society. It could even have made sense to make some fatuous pun on the resemblance of that Somali word for news or information with its English homonym for armed conflict, and thus engage the reader through a witty engagement of a common trope in the portrayal of the contemporary Somali predicament: violence.

Conveniently snappy as each of those opening gambits might have been, each would have been both unsatisfactory and ultimately misleading for the direction that this thesis endeavours to take. Should I, from the start of this project, have grounded my perspective in an essentialisation of Somali ‘culture’? Would every subsequent and carefully worded disclaimer, definition or appeal to nuance be enough to avoid the pitfalls of reductive reasoning, or the presentation of Somali exceptionalism that colours so many breathless popular accounts of the ‘problem’ of Somalia, the violence of the Horn, the intractability of political contestation? Is the ‘Somali’ – depicted as ancestor of Richard Burton’s timeless ‘fierce and turbulent republican’ (1856/2014, 76) – orientated towards news in a different way to other peoples: to me, for instance? What is it about my ‘culture’ that makes me feel and act the way I do towards the transmission of information? Is this a question I have ever even considered before? If not, why not?

For other disciplines such automatic reflexivity is well established. There is some truth in the claim raised by the *#Cadaanstudies* movement that Somali studies has continued on somewhat oblivious to the critical contributions of the subaltern studies debates on South Asia (and the wider world) from the early 1980s (Spivak 2003). One can argue that as a field it remains compromised by colonial paradigms and mechanisms of knowledge production now sitting comfortably within a nexus of academic, policy and security-studies research, whose fundamental aim is the management or containment of the risk that the world’s most prolonged state ‘failure’ brings to powerful global interests. Somalia’s particular trajectory since civil war in the 1980s does present unique challenges to the analyst, and the apparent distinctiveness of Somalia’s prolonged absence of unitary state structures and ongoing conflict has created the conditions (alongside other factors and power imbalances) where scholarship can overlap clumsily with humanitarian or strategic policy.

² Amin Arts cartoon, August 2015. See Figure 4.5 (Chapter 4)

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: 'grounding' a media methodology

Although the tags of Somalia's 'statelessness' or 'anarchy' are often served up with such hyperbole and a lack of discriminating nuance that they lack any meaningful analytical value, it is nonetheless important to recognize the distinctiveness of Somalia's contemporary political experience, particularly if an effort is made to push any research findings into a wider theoretical arena – in this case, analysis of the relationship between ethno-religious political identification, media technologies, and fragmenting states. Somalia is different from other comparable national case studies, primarily in that state-collapse was total and protracted to a point not experienced elsewhere in the modern post-colonial world. In the global context, there is no other nation-state of comparable size in which a wider array of sub-state or secessionist administrations have made effective claims to political authority for so long, and where the internationally-recognized national Government is so weak by comparison. From a different point of comparison, relative ethnic, linguistic and religious homogeneity stretching within and beyond the borders of the Somali state is highly distinctive in an African political context where a characteristic of state-building has often been the management heterogeneity within 'artificial' political boundaries (Herbst 1989). Even Somalia's status as an 'African' case study is challenged by orientations of many of those who identify as 'Somalis', away from the continent, and towards the Islamic or Arab world. This process is now intensified by cultural flows from the Arab world and reinvigorated discourses of political Islam, but has its deep roots in the mythology of Arab lineage descent, and colonial categorisations of race within which many Somalis sought to position themselves more favourably (Kusow 1995, 83; Ahmed 1995, 141; Besteman 1995, 50).

Sensitive to critiques of 'methodological nationalism' or the naturalization of the nation-state as the taken-for-granted unit of analysis in political science (Wimmer and Schiller, 2002), this thesis problematises the very idea of the Somali nation in the context of transnational circuits of political communication. It argues that ideas (and critiques or rejections) of this nation-state are conditioned by the particular technological and political contours of a dynamic and contested Somali-language public sphere. Considered here is Somalia's 'place' within regional, continental and global systems of politics and conflict. In many ways, the contemporary Somali experience is spatially understood to be largely peripheral in that its long-term exceptionalism and chronic condition – whether in terms of political malaise or humanitarian need – renders it a special case that receives fairly limited attention; a sideshow of the 'Global War on Terror' or African Union and United Nations' 'stabilisation' efforts.

Nonetheless, instability, conflict and state 'failure' in this periphery periodically manifest themselves in ways which have tangible impacts on world systems and security. Armed young men in skiffs who threaten global shipping lanes necessitate almost unprecedented multilateral naval coordination; terrorists gun down shoppers at Nairobi's Westgate, and threaten others half a world away in malls in Minnesota; refugees and economic migrants (prolonged crisis having inescapably blurred these categories) make up one inflow into the maelstrom of population movement facing Europe and the Middle East today. Situating Somalia – between exceptionalism and relevance to

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: 'grounding' a media methodology

theory, peripheral instability and threats to global 'centres' – is one goal of the wider thesis. This is necessary for both for the proper framing of the research questions and subsequent arguments, but it also has a direct bearing on the material analysed as evidence. The way in which producers in the Somali media environment understand Somalia's place in the world influences the very imaginaries of political identity and communication that I explore in subsequent chapters.

Navigating between the genuine particularity of the Somali context and a desire to make a broader contribution to the existing literature on political identities and the public sphere, the thesis engages with presentations of Somali 'culture' and their role within the reconfiguration of Somali statehood(s). To avoid reproducing a narrative of Somali exceptionalism or the essentialisation of the 'cultural' component of this analysis, it is necessary to define the specific ways in which culture is conceptualised and deployed. I draw heavily from Wedeen's designation of culture as 'semiotic practices', the 'process of meaning-making in which agents' practices (e.g. their work habits, self-policing strategies, and leisure patterns) interact with their language and other symbolic systems' (2002, 713). 'Culture' for political science is transformed from an abstract theoretical category of 'common knowledge', or a Geertzian system of coherent pre-configured symbols, into a repertoire of discourses which produce observable outcomes (*Ibid*). Chabal & Daloz focus on 'meanings' and the 'attempt to reveal the language in which people, who may disagree about values, or political ends, can do so within a shared perspective' (2006, 22). While this builds on Geertz's notion of culture as a context in which events or actions can be intelligibly (or 'thickly') described (Geertz, 1973, 14), Chabal & Daloz push this emphasis on interpretation of meaning into a critique of commonly held distinctions in socio-political analysis that equate ethnicity with identity (unchangeable, inherent) and religion with belief (taught). As they point out, such a distinction is a product of the Western experience and may not hold true in other parts of the world where ethnicity can be conceived of as being fluid, and religion innate or God-given (Chabal & Daloz, 2006, 117).

Barber's approach to 'texts' has proved helpful here in grappling with the notion of culture in media production. For Barber a 'text' is an oral or written utterance that attempts to attract attention and to outlast the moment (2007, 2). Instead of being viewed as a 'window' to the producer's individual subjectivity (or culture), Barber argues that analysis of texts must foreground genre and the 'conceptual materials' available to that producer to gain an understanding of what it is attempting to do in a particular social, historical and technological context: 'if a verbal text is to "tell us" anything about a society, social experience or cultural values, this can only be *through* its specific textuality, its specific way of being a text' (2007, 13 emphasis in original). Texts, for Barber *say* things, *do* things and *are* things; they are 'social and historical facts whose forms, transformation and dispersal can be studied empirically' (*Ibid*, 200). The subsequent chapters attempt to place changing and emerging forms of political communication (such as cartoons, audio-visual propaganda, online/print news and opinion pieces) within a wider frame of Somali literary and cultural production and highlight the ways in which the technological context of their production and dissemination affects their

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: 'grounding' a media methodology

'entextualisation': the 'process of rendering a given instance of discourse as text, detachable from its local context' (*Ibid*, 22; Silverstein and Urban 1996, 21).

The subsequent analysis simultaneously attempts an interpretation of meaning or identification of the 'work' of symbols, whilst also considering the explicit use of 'cultural' arguments and forms within the media texts that are explored. Central to the thesis's argument is that political reconfiguration in the Somali context is taking place alongside contestation over 'authentic' Somali 'culture', and that the form and content of communication in the public sphere is influenced by actors' perceptions of ethnically-defined practices and norms. This is elaborated on in Chapter four with regard to cultural contestation across and between generational and diaspora/local political arenas; in Chapter five with regard to the ethno-nationalist components of Somali Islamist discourses; and in Chapter six with regard to the way in which debates over what is presented as the quintessentially 'Somali' political-culture of clan division feedback into wider imaginations of shared identity and 'federal' power-politics. In each of these settings culture is specifically invoked in debates over political authority and thus overlaps with the different presentations of political ethno-religious nationalism. In taking the texts of these actors and commentators seriously, the chapters attempt to explain the fact of political and religious contestation alongside the persistence (and thus importance) of the 'myth' (Hesse 2010) of Somali ethno-nationalist imagination.

2.3. My background

My interest in the political situation of the Somali Horn of Africa was sparked initially through interactions with members of the British Somali diaspora community in my home town of Newport, South Wales. I was an undergraduate student in London, but did summer work at the Newport YMCA, an important community centre located in the Pillgwenlly neighbourhood where many of the town's Somali community reside. Having had the opportunity to briefly visit Somaliland in this capacity ('fact-finding' for possible collaborations between the YMCA, the diaspora and communities in Somaliland), I returned to the School of Oriental and African Studies keen to take advantage of the (rare) possibility to take Somali language classes. Continuing this language tuition alongside my MSc. in the politics department, I graduated with a desire to get back to the Horn of Africa to develop my language skills. Through contacts of my Somali teachers at SOAS, I was put in touch with the University of Hargeysa who were interested in employing me as an English language teacher for their undergraduates.

What I had anticipated would be a few months of volunteer teaching, became two years of full-time employment between 2009 and 2011, where I worked for the University establishing and running a new English Language Department. Developing course materials, hiring local and foreign teachers, and managing academic records and progress for the nearly 2000 students on our books proved to be a challenging and fascinating experience, affording me great insight into the booming tertiary education sector in Somaliland. Being employed directly by the university (and not by an

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: 'grounding' a media methodology

international organisation) brought with it its own challenges and opportunities. My experience with UoH gave me useful insight into the social and cultural dynamics of coordinating an educational program inserting a group of (mostly) non-Muslim, white, western foreigners directly into both the university and the local community where the sight of white people on the streets (outside of their NGO Landcruisers) was rare or even unheard of. Lacking restrictive security regulations I was able to move relatively freely around Hargeysa; to ride the public buses, shop in the central market, and 'hang-out' in the cafes, tea-stands, restaurants and hotels where 'ordinary' Somalilanders gather to read newspapers, watch TV, listen to the radio and discuss. Experiencing Hargeysan cafe culture was important for me in developing my language skills outside of my more formal weekly classes with a local teacher, and I spent large amounts of highly-caffeinated time reading newspapers and chatting with my fellow customers.

Through interactions with students at the University I developed an interest in the political worldviews of young people - a 'Somaliland Generation' with no prior experience of the unitary Somali state. I was particularly fascinated with what I perceived at the time to be apparent tensions between political expressions of Islam (Islamism) and Somaliland nationalism. Students would often express to me the argument that Somaliland *should* be recognised by the international community because it was a functioning democracy, then almost in the same breath, point out that democracy (as a cultural norm) was incompatible with Islam and was thus not appropriate for Somaliland. These discussions highlighted a range of vocabularies of identity and nationalism (both coherent and contradictory) and epitomised for me the dynamism of the Somaliland project, at least in the city of Hargeysa.

With this in mind, I left Hargeysa in 2011 intending to start a PhD exploring discourses of Somaliland nationalism in the public sphere, with particular reference to the relationship between Islamism and state legitimacy. After my first year of study I was approached by the International Committee of the Red Cross which was recruiting Somali language interpreters for their expanding 'protection' activities across Somalia. Realising that this could afford me unique opportunities to travel and work across south-central and northeastern Somalia, I interrupted my studies at Edinburgh and took the job. Between 2012 and 2014 I worked for the ICRC in places of detention and with various 'arms-carriers' and political authorities. The objectives of the ICRC's 'protection' activities are to work with authorities to improve conditions of detention for people detained as a result of armed conflict, and promote respect for and compliance with international humanitarian law.

Considerations of ICRC neutrality and confidentiality (of paramount importance for the organisation's ability to access highly sensitive places of detention) have prevented me from directly using any data gathered from my interactions with arms carriers, political authorities or detainees in Somalia. Nevertheless, part of my work for the organisation involved monitoring, translating and analysing Somali language news media material, primarily related to developments in the ongoing conflict and various actors' perceptions of or orientations towards international humanitarian actors.

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: 'grounding' a media methodology

Undertaking this alongside specialist ICRC media field officers in Somalia increased my familiarity with the topography of the media environment across Somalia, and I was initially exposed to many of the open-source texts used in my different regional or ideological samples here during my work with the organisation.

My joining of the ICRC coincided with the fall of Kismaayo in 2012. The Kenyan Defence Forces' Operation *Linda Nchi* succeeded in capturing the southern port city from AS, and my work with ICRC continued through to the execution of AMISOM's 2014 operation *Badweynta Hindiya* which led to further territorial gains against the militant Islamist group (Williams 2016). Working in Somalia allowed me to witness first-hand the reconstruction and reconfiguration of the Somali state in what was a unique period of great optimism for political stabilisation. This was tempered by a continued insurgency and the difficulties inherent in rebuilding a political apparatus in Somalia with any potential to unify or govern effectively. I was able to witness the paradox of foreign military occupation and foreign political intervention in what was supposed to be a context of nation-building or reconstruction and I began to consider the different ways in which these processes were being understood and expressed by multiple Somali political actors. I had the opportunity to work with individuals in nascent government institutions (whether relics of the past or newly emerging power structures) which, despite not constituting the direct subject of this research, helped me gain an initial understanding of some of the power dynamics underlying this process. I was able to travel extensively around Somalia and witness the popular expression of (or reactions against) the tangible state-building that was happening around people: the flags, ceremonies, songs, stories, rumours, jokes, slogans, cartoons that exist and are reproduced in public spheres of media and popular discourse.

Being exposed to multiple narratives of Somali politics threw new light on my previous experiences of Somaliland, and broadened my understanding of a wider political-discursive reality in the Somali Horn. The relative ease of access to Somaliland has made it something of a haven for foreign researchers wanting to experience a Somali political environment. This, arguably, has led either to an over-representation of the Somaliland case, or the tendency to extend arguments derived from that context over the wider Somali region. Whilst themes such as state formation, the role of elders, political tradition/modernity/hybridity have been explored in depth, often with fascinating results, this has led to Somaliland (with its own nationalist narrative and presentation of itself to outsiders) becoming the point of comparison for the rest of Somalia vis-à-vis state-building and peace-building.

While I retained my interest in the themes of nationalism and Islamism encountered during my time in Somaliland, I made the decision to attempt a comparative analysis of the question of political/religious discourse in the public spheres of news media and political commentary across different Somali contexts. In undertaking fieldwork in the political capitals of 'Somalia', 'Puntland' and 'Somaliland' - and examining local and transnational media texts in reference to these centres - the analysis reproduces a three-way division of the territories that is familiar from journalistic and

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: ‘grounding’ a media methodology

policy-orientated writing, as well as practical international engagement. This discursive division of the territories belies the actual complexity of configurations political and military power on the ground, particularly, but not exclusively, with regard to who controls what in southern Somalia. Nonetheless, constraints on where I could undertake fieldwork (outlined below), combined with my desire to present a legible comparative frame for analysis of political commentary, has meant that the thesis inevitably relies on these territorial divisions. Recognising the limitations of the framing, each chapter attempts to demonstrate the complexity of the Somali public sphere with regard to the overlap of voices and the often transnational orientation of commentators. Whilst certain voices are inevitably left out, I argue that there remains value in attempting to understand media production and political argumentation in this comparative three-way framing. For example, I address how other power centres of Somalia view, understand or critique the Somaliland ‘project’ and, in turn, this analysis engages with the discursive or rhetorical conventions and strategies of different writers in Hargeysa in their discussions of the wider politics of the Somali Horn of Africa. This type of comparative critical discourse analysis across different political contexts in Somalia/Somaliland has not been undertaken elsewhere and scholarly focus on the discursive workings of the types of media text I address in subsequent chapters is limited. Much more attention has been given to the corpus of poetic Somali argumentation – as political communication or social history – and below I situate this work in relation to my own while justifying the alternative focus.

My emphasis on public spheres of media production is in itself partly a product of my personal and professional experiences in the Somali territories. Simply put, I have had much greater exposure to public sphere sites of media production and dissemination than I have had to ‘private’ realms of social interaction and discussion. In two years of living in Hargeysa I was rarely invited into people’s homes. This, I believe, was a function of both my residence with other foreign teachers and the cultural distance that existed or was perceived to exist between me (particularly as a non-Muslim) and ‘ordinary’ Somalilanders. This is not to suggest that my interactions with people were characterised by unfriendliness (far from it, I remain in close contact with many of the good friends I made in Hargeysa), but rather our professional and social interactions would largely take place in ‘public’ settings. Working for the ICRC in the entirely different security contexts of south-central Somalia and Puntland afforded even less opportunity for access to the ‘private’ than might have been open to me in Hargeysa had I been more socially proactive.

My greater familiarity with the ‘public’ has fuelled my interest in the ways in which political communication and debate – however localised – can be framed in the context of a broader (even global) audience defined and understood as ‘Somali’, and this observation has formed the nucleus of the methodology and analysis. I myself have also been a media producer on Somalia, albeit in an English-language setting. While living in Hargeysa between 2009 and 2011, I also worked as a freelance photographer documenting subjects ranging from Somaliland’s independence day celebrations to the refugee Somali Olympian athlete Samia Yusuf (before her tragic death in the

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: ‘grounding’ a media methodology

Mediterranean *en route* to Europe) for outlets such as the BBC, Die Zeit and AFP³. As a producer and consumer of visual material on Somalia and Somaliland I have developed an interest in the relationships between ‘Somali’ identity expression, discussions of external narratives around the Somali Horn and the types of debates I note above in the Somali-language public sphere itself. This chapter has already hinted at this particular discursive nexus in relation to the #Cadaanstudies movement and presentations of the ‘Somali’ subject. This is a theme I reflect on in the conclusion below.

2.4. Methodology overview

The research employs a mixed-methods and primarily qualitative approach in order to explore the relationships between media production, state reconfiguration and popular political imaginations of nationalism across Somalia and Somaliland. The first component of this methodology is critical discourse analysis of Somali-language media texts. Specific case studies of important ‘types’ of Somali-language media texts have been chosen and are defined by particularly prevalent producers or subject matter: cartoons produced and reproduced online and in print, militant Islamist audio-visual propaganda, and written online/print opinion pieces. The form and content of these texts (along with supplementary news media writings and broadcasts) are analysed with comparative reference to the three political centres of Hargeysa, Garoowe and Muqdisho in which I undertook fieldwork, the broader transnational Somali media ecology, and a longer history of Somali literary/cultural production. This is supplemented by semi-structured interviews with media producers and elites linked to media-production; ethnographic observation of public sphere sites/events; and focus groups and survey data collection on media consumption amongst a younger generation of university students. The following sections contextualise and justify these methodological choices while also reflecting on their use in the ‘field’.

2.4.1. Texts, sampling and critical discourse analysis

Chapters four, five and six each highlight the context and importance of the three types of media texts chosen for discursive and content analysis. Nonetheless, it is important to summarise the reasons for this focus here. With regards to Chapter four, I argue that the cartoons of Amin Amir are unique as they represent a form of *individual* written and visual ‘nationalist’ political commentary that is consumed and reproduced across all of the political territories I conducted fieldwork in. His location in the diaspora is significant, although in building on previous studies of external influence (and considering the increasing prevalence of internet access in urban Somali itself) this chapter problematises a restrictive local/diasporic analytical binary in its analysis of these materials as part of

³ BBC, May 18, 2011: ‘In pictures: Somaliland independence day’ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13445477> ; Die Zeit, August 30, 2012 ‘*Sie life um ihr Leben*’

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: ‘grounding’ a media methodology

the media ecology ‘on the ground’ in the Horn of Africa. Chapter five acknowledges that the militant Harakaat Al Shabaab Al Mujahidiin group wage an effective media war against internationally ‘recognised’ state actors, alongside a brutal campaign of insurgency and terrorism. Their media production is varied and sophisticated, and analysis of a particular form of ‘positive’ propaganda video targeted specifically at Somali-speaking audiences provides a useful lens through which to explore the parameters of Islamist *and* ethno-nationalist visions of Somali political conflict and change. Chapter six’s exploration of the genre of the written political opinion piece focuses on examples that date from the post-2012 SFG era, explicitly engage with the questions of the federal reconfiguration of the state, and employ clan-specific language or critiques. Analysis of this form of prose gives insight into the ways in which diverse and changing vocabularies of ‘division’ themselves contribute to ethno-nationalist imaginations of the ‘Somali lands’. While the following chapter will give a detailed overview of the media ecology in which all of these texts are produced, this section proceeds to situate this selection of these three types of text in relation to the broader scholarship on Somali literary and cultural production. As such, it also elaborates further on the specific rationale behind this selection of samples of particular types of media text.

Cultural ‘texts’ in the transnational Somali public sphere encompass a wide array of material and formats, many of which have been explored in Somali studies scholarship to trace changing technological, social and political contexts of production. Introduced in the previous chapter’s discussion of the development of the Somali nation-state, there exists a wide literature on shifting conventions of poetic composition, song and theatre (Johnson 1974; Samatar 1982, 2009; Afrax 1987, 1994; Kapteijns 1995, 2009, 2010; Barnes 2006; Ducaale 2006; Sheikh Cabdillaahi 2009; Andrzejewski 2011). I return to this below in order to position the particular types of text this thesis engages with. Moving beyond the literary, scholarship has also looked – through micro and macro perspectives – at other forms of artistic and material culture to identify processes of social change and contestation. Declich’s (1995) study of dance forms amongst southern ‘Bantu origin’ populations demonstrates the tension and fusion between traditional forms of expression and sociality and the parameters of correct religious conduct, while Akou (2011) ties her analysis of changing clothing styles to the nationalist state-building project, ideas of female emancipation, and later emphases on public piety accompanying increasingly assertive Islamist doctrines. This wider Somali cultural studies literature is also of relevance to discourses I identify in analysis of certain types of modern media text.

The prominence of oral modes of social and political communication have long been emphasised in research on cultural production in the Somali-speaking Horn of Africa. The classic image of information being passed by word of mouth through a dispersed and mobile nomadic pastoralist population continues to colour both scholarly and popular imaginations of quintessentially ‘Somali’ communication networks. Poetry has often been examined as the form of oral aesthetic-didactic communication *par excellence*, a highly structured medium through which arguments are

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: 'grounding' a media methodology

made between and within clan groupings. The parameters and settings of poetic communication vary: from their prosaic utility in the passing of messages or stories from group to group; their role during inter or intra clan meetings or peace negotiations; their deployment as a weapon of war; and their potential for various types of mass mobilisation – such as during 20th Century anti-colonial struggles or the post-colonial era of state-building and nationalist propaganda (Samatar 1982; Barnes 2006; Andrzejewski 2011). Amidst these various possible functions, a poet, by means of the particular form chosen and his particular skill of composition and oratory, can become a highly influential individual with the capacity to swing debates, mobilise support and deal substantive blows to adversaries. Politics is intimately bound up in the practice of poetic oratory, and as Samatar puts it: 'poetry is not the craft of an esoteric group of beauty minded men whose role in society is at best marginal. On the contrary, his craft place the Somali poet in the mainstream of society and his energies and imagination are constantly drawn upon for social purposes' (1982: 56-56).

In post state-collapse Somalia, Kapteijns has explored poetic texts in the changing context of conflict across the territories, emphasising important distinctions made by audiences between 'prestigious' poetry speaking to a national audience and 'non-prestigious' clan-specific hate-speech (2012, 59; Samatar 1982). Although this work primarily focuses on the build-up to, and immediate aftermath of, state-collapse, she engages with expressions of social and religious change in Somalia in the post-1991 period through analysis of various examples of poetry and song (see also her 2009 account of post-colonial nationalist-era music). Highlighting generational shifts, Kapteijns describes one particular text as 'typical of much of the poetry and song texts of the nationalist era (1955-1991) in which Islam was present as an organic, self-evident, and integral part of the Somali cultural legacy that did not need separate mention' (2012, 43). This is contrasted with examples she gives from early 2000s' poetic discourse of more frequent and explicit references to Islam in the context of conflict or peace-making. Such an approach demonstrates the value of engagement with cultural-political texts that reflect (and possibly condition) changing ideological orientations and perspectives in the fluid environment of stateless contestation for power.

Kapteijns also highlights the increasing importance of electronic media and online connectivity, not simply as another means of communication, but rather in terms of its role as a 'junction of all these media flows' and the development of Somali cyberspace as 'the single most comprehensive and continuously expanding depository of Somali cultural production in existence' (*Ibid*, 23; 2009, 122; Isse Salwe 2008). The material and analysis presented in this thesis takes its cue from Kapteijn's observations, but attempts to expand on and update the analysis of the communications context in which different media operate. In doing so, the analysis shifts to the broader category of news media and political commentary in the Somali language public sphere: material characterised by various formats including radio broadcasting, video and television production and print news media and political commentary. Poetic discourse, as the textual analysis of

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: 'grounding' a media methodology

subsequent chapters will show, continues to play a role in terms of its specific content and the popular legitimacy of the form within and across this multi-media environment.

Considering the global context of communications technology, distinctions between 'old' and 'new' or 'mass' and 'social' media are growing increasingly irrelevant. This is particularly true for younger generations of consumers and producers who have grown up in public sphere environments where online connectivity and instant electronic dissemination of media is simply taken for granted. This observation also holds true for the media landscape in Somalia and, in one sense, the blurring of these media boundaries may be even more pronounced here. Expansions of internet and mobile phone connectivity have taken place *contemporaneously* with periods of statelessness and political or economic reconstruction, and so the media market is not characterised (as in much of the rest of the world) by large established mass or state-media orientated entities having to adjust programming and content to new technological realities. Instead, these changes to the technological communications environment have themselves often precipitated the emergence of the highly fragmented and privatised media producers that are now influential across Somalia. Regardless of attempts by power holders to exert control over local media as part of processes of state reconstruction, such agendas of regulation will remain compromised by the existence of producers and networks which have emerged in the context of unhindered connectivity and an unregulated media market.

Somali cyberspace has been explored by several other scholars, although the analyses have largely focused on the phenomenon from a diasporic perspective – in terms of expression or identity formation in the diaspora vis-à-vis connectivity with the Somali territories (cf. Olden 1999, Brinkerhoff 2006; Horst 2006, Issa-Salwa 2008). For instance, Osman's recent thesis (2015) on diasporic 'conflict recreation' through deterritorialised media, illustrates the potential for transnational populations to employ such communicative technologies for potentially destabilising purposes. This focus is understandable given the fact that up until recently online access has been far more prevalent in the diaspora. With expansions of internet infrastructure and mobile technology in the Horn this situation (at least for urban areas) is rapidly changing. As such, there has hitherto been relatively little substantial academic engagement with the modern news media environment as it operates on the ground in Somalia - taking into account this dynamic and transnational public sphere, and the ways in which producers and consumers interact across and beyond the political territories of the Somali Horn.

Analyses of 'old' media remain useful for this type of endeavour. For instance, Hoehne's introduction to the burgeoning newspaper scene in Hargeysa (2008) emphasises the impact of stability and economic growth on the publishing industry, while Stremlau's discussion of the politics of radio liberalization in the same city (2013) portrays a broadcasting environment constrained by policy-makers' perceptions of the fragility of a hard won peace. Stremlau, Fantini and Osman's (2015) recent analysis of radio stations in southern Somalia makes an important contribution to understandings of the modern political economy of media production in a localised setting, and

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: ‘grounding’ a media methodology

highlights similar commercial and conflict dynamics to those I encountered during my own fieldwork (reflected on in the following chapter). Stremlau *et al.* convincingly explain why the Somali media industry has been able to continue to expand in a conflict environment and argue that the sector operates by its own logic, aside from the normative claims of journalists themselves or those who seek to support or influence them (2015, 2).

The three particular types of text I explore in chapters four, five and six all circulate in this wider news media environment, primarily in print and online formats. The fact that a vibrant economy exists for political discussion in media - some of which may be paid for by interested parties for self-promotion or the slander of competitors - indicates that such content is perceived by such actors to be important. This thesis seeks to build on this political-economy approach in exploring how the material logics of the media industry – alongside the fragmentation of political power – influence the ways in which political identity are popularly expressed and imagined in media *content*. Here, an explicitly comparative methodology engages the concept of a multilayered Somali public sphere and reflects on how interaction on local and transnational levels influences wider political discourses on ethno-nationalism and expectations of Somali statehood(s).

Another factor that has prompted the broadening of the textual scope of this study to include more written (and often digitalised) media is the status of the Somali language itself. The formalisation of the Somali orthography in 1972 was a significant (though not uncontroversial) achievement of Siad Barre’s military regime, and the apparent degradation of the Somali language in the post state-collapse era is a problem much lamented by public intellectuals. The reconstruction of the Somali state thus also entails a linguistic component whereby political authorities assume responsibility – as part of a nationalist agenda – to promote and advance the linguistic status of Somali. Questions of which ‘Somali’, whose ‘Somali’, and where exactly this responsibility lies are part of the discourse around this issue, and the nationalist component of such linguistic and educational agendas are clear to political actors involved⁴. Laitin’s 1977 study of the ‘politics, language and thought’ of the process of earlier script formalisation gives an insight into the contemporary contestation of that fraught process. Heated debates during that period over the possible utilisation of Arabic script, new ‘Somali’ alphabets or a Latin based system (the eventual choice) engaged questions of ‘cultural’ and religious as well as linguistic identity of a Somali nation state. The question of what exactly was ‘formalized’ by the adoption of the Somali orthography in 1972 is itself disputed and is of relevance for both the modern media environment and the cultural identity of re-emerging state structures. Lamberti (1983, 31) states that ‘Daarood’ dialects from the Mudug region and the Ethiopian Ogaden became the benchmark for education and broadcasting. Orwin, on the other hand, notes that there has never been a single official standard and that modern language use has been

⁴ Indicative of this is the coincidental fact that in early January 2015 (as I was writing the first draft of this chapter) I was approached by the Ministry of Education in Muqdisho to record a short (Somali language) statement for celebrations marking the 43rd anniversary of the formalisation of the Somali script.

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: ‘grounding’ a media methodology

characterised by multiple dialects and interpretations, as well as continued debates over the nature of ‘pure’ Somali (cited in Landinfo 2011, 9).

Nevertheless, regardless of whether one defines *Af Maxaa Tiri* as a ‘northern’ dialect (complicated as this is by the physical presence of clan-defined speakers of this tongue in southern areas⁵) it is evident that the adoption of official orthography did have the inevitable impact of marginalising the *Af Maay* spoken predominantly in the inter-riverine areas of southern Somalia. This process corresponded with the broader positioning (introduced in the previous chapter) of markers of pastoral ‘northern’ cultural heritage at the heart of the Somali identity promoted by post-colonial power holders. Debates around language are being re-invoked in processes of state (re)construction across the Somali territories. As such, the following chapters engage with the history of script formalisation and its legacy in numerous ways, paying particular attention to the self (and externally) perceived role of modern media producers in promoting the written language, and the impact of the adoption of new communications technologies. The chapters also highlight how the status of the written language (vis-à-vis external linguistic and religious influences) is itself indicative of the wider contours of conflict over the ‘cultural identity’ and boundaries of Somali nationalist imaginations.

With the above approach mind, it is necessary to describe my exposure to Somali media and further outline the rationale (introduced above) behind the selection of the types of texts that make up the bulk of the data for Chapters four, five and six of the thesis. My own personal and professional background in Somalia/Somaliland has had a significant effect on my engagement with media and, inevitably, on my selection of sources and texts. Working for the University of Hargeysa I had numerous opportunities to work and interact with students and staff. My discussions with young people on topics ranging from the independence movement, Islamism and democratic institutions, ‘good’ Islamic social conduct were what spurred my initial interest in the discursive environment of state-building, and I was also able to discuss and observe colleagues’ and students’ media consumption and preferences. Indeed, I spent large amounts of time ‘hanging out’ in the cafes of the city, gradually improving my spoken and written Somali through conversations with my compatriots and endless reading of Hargeysa’s vibrant print media.

My work for the International Committee of the Red Cross afforded me opportunities to spend time in Puntland and south-central Somalia. Interactions with colleagues, government officials, and civilians as well as exposure to new media networks prompted me to broaden my research focus into a comparative study of the wider Somali language public sphere. I was lucky enough to work

⁵ Technically, in Lamberti’s division of dialects ‘Northern Somali’ refers only to the clan-defined dialects spoken in Waqooyi Galbeed (Northwestern), Togdheer, Sanaag and western Nugaal regions. This is separate from the ‘Daarood’ dialects that are spoken across most of the north-east (today’s Puntland), the Ethiopian Ogaden, and along the Ethiopian border in the central and southern regions of Galgaduud, Bakool and Gedo. Nonetheless, these two sets of dialects are very similar and *together* can be taken as the basis of “standard” Somali and *Af Maxaa Tiri* (Lamberti 1986, Kapchits 2015). This historical amalgamation of dialects in the context of state broadcasting and education, combined with limitations on modern scholarship explain continued popular debates over which (sub)dialect did constitute or still constitutes ‘pure’ Somali.

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: 'grounding' a media methodology

alongside Somali colleagues focused on media monitoring across the Somali regions. Interactions with these staff members as well as those within the wider delegation allowed me to gain perspective on the types and sources of media consumed. Although most of my former colleagues would be considered elites in the wider social-economic context (a status that employment with an international organisation bestows), in other respects (gender, generation, geographic location, clan, links with or experience in the diaspora) they were a diverse group. Engagement with many different individuals regarding their media consumption habits, preferences and political perspectives has informed the type of textual sample that I have built up.

Following Chapter three's ethnography of media production in Somalia, Chapter four explores the work of cartoonist Amin Amir, a media producer and commentator who enjoys a remarkable (and essentially unique) position of individual influence and popularity across the Somali territories. The irony here is that the artist behind this oft-referenced and reproduced material dealing with the daily developments and intrigues of Somali politics is, in fact, based in the diaspora. The use of his material, I argue, is valuable in the broader analysis of the Somali public sphere for two reasons. Firstly, it provides a vehicle through which to explore many of the discursive tropes of nationalism and cultural nostalgia that are common in contestation over, and legitimisation of, state reconstruction. Secondly, it is indicative of the inherent trans-nationalism of communication circuits that characterise the public sphere and contribute to 'de-territorialised' imaginations of the global *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*. The relationship (or disconnect) between this apparent de-territorialisation of nationalist identity in the public sphere, and the apparently increasing territorialisation of localised conflict dynamics on the ground in Somalia is returned to in the concluding chapter.

Furthermore, Chapter four elaborates on methodological calls in the fields of critical or popular geopolitics for closer attention to audience reception of media products. It does this by highlighting certain areas (particularly around the linguistic and cultural context of individual media ecologies) which, I argue, are often left inadequately interrogated in recent scholarship on African and Middle Eastern public sphere satire or 'resistance'-based civic agency. My discussion of diasporic cartoons *as they are consumed and reproduced in Somalia* is grounded in a contextualisation of the very form which media products may take within a distinctive public sphere environment. This then emphasises the political or cultural significance of certain visual or linguistic features of media products which may be taken for granted in other contexts. The chapter examines how the identity and technological/geographic reach of the producer (as well as the discursive tenor of his work) can help contribute to our understanding of the parameters of the wider Somali public sphere and the nature of civic agency.

This 'grounded' approach is maintained through the following two text-based chapters, with chapter 5 exploring a particular set of ethno-nationalist/Jihadist-orientated propaganda videos as a vector through which to explore the wider discursive field of Islamism (political or militant Islam) in the Somali public sphere. The chapter does *not* argue that these particular Al Furqaan Media videos

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: 'grounding' a media methodology

are representative of the broader field of Islamist activism Somalia, but instead that they sit at one end of a broad spectrum of religiously-orientated nationalist expressions of Somali statehood. Indeed, in comparing these narratives with other types of media commentary and rhetoric which engage Islam, the chapter argues that the frequent dichotomising of 'radical' or 'extremist' and 'moderate' or 'traditional' Islam in the Somali discursive political context is fraught with analytical pitfalls and overlooks the broad socio-religious changes which impact expressions and expectations of emerging Somali statehood(s).

The analysis of cartoons and audio visual propaganda in Chapters four and five draw on supplementary media texts from, or aimed at, the three political centres in which I carried out fieldwork. Chapter six, however, exploring written commentary on the 'federal' reconfiguration of Somalia, analyses in the most explicitly comparative manner the ways in which different political actors conceptualise and present each other in context of state fragmentation and reconstruction. Here the sample of texts is made up of written opinion pieces, editorial-type articles and more prosaic (and ostensibly more objective) pieces of news reportage. These texts date from 2012 onwards (the installation of the SFG in Mogadishu and a shift in the military campaign against AS), debate the federal project promoted by the 'international community' and power holders in Mogadishu, and explicitly employ tropes of clan 'division' in their analysis or condemnation of political fragmentation. The analysis considers the identities and role of both the writers and the particular format they are using to 'entextualise' discourse (Barber 2007, 22). The chapter identifies various ways in which 'division' and 'clanism', as dynamic concepts, are utilised, discussed and critiqued by local actors and commentators across the wider Somali political context. This examination of a particular type of rhetoric (clan-based claims to or attacks on political legitimacy) does *not* suggest that this is the only discursive strategy used by actors and groups in the Somali political context, or that it is static. Instead, Chapter six argues that a critical analysis of the popularly conceived and expressed trope of 'clanism' is a useful lens through which to examine many of the themes and debates raised in preceding chapters such as the identity of the Somali 'nation' in terms of Islam and 'culture', and the deployment of various historical narratives in support of different political projects. Here, the chapter contends that changing narratives of 'division' can themselves contribute to the idea of a Somali nation – one that is caught up in processes of extraversion and a supposed 'cultural' predisposition to fragmentation.

These different types of media text are explored in the chapters through the use of critical discourse analysis. Wodak highlights some of the core principles of this 'heterogeneous school' which include leanings toward inter-disciplinarity; a problem orientated approach (i.e. a starting focus on identity or social change); an emphasis on textual data combined with ethnographic fieldwork in the sites of production and reception of such texts; the abductive process of constantly moving back and forth between data and theory; and persistent recognition of the importance of the historical context of the text under analysis (2004, 186). Critical discourse analysis treats language as a social practice in

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: 'grounding' a media methodology

itself and emphasises the dialectical relationship between a context and a 'discursive event' - i.e. the fact they mutually condition and are conditioned by each other. In other words, 'discourse analysis identifies the rules that make a text... in the same way that grammar characterizes the structure of sentences, discourse rules characterize utterances/texts that are acceptable within a certain practice' (*Ibid*, 191). The analyses of my case studies identify various discourses which are expressed in the Somali public sphere and the ways in which they structure and are structured by the context (or 'practice') of conflict and state reconfiguration or reconstruction.

I was initially hesitant to label my approach explicitly in terms of critical discourse analysis due to linguistic insecurity on my part: I can read and understand a Somali newspaper but would that mean (I asked myself) that I would be able to perform discourse analysis on that text, given that this is a challenging undertaking even in one's native language? With more immersion in the literature I became more confident in incorporating many of the different strategies of this methodology - for instance, specific focus on concrete textual features of news media such as passive voice constructions and the obscuring of agency (Blommaert 2000). This focus dovetails with an approach that is sensitive to forms of news reporting in the local media and the extent to which externally-derived journalistic patterns of language contrast with the everyday discourses of politics; or, the potential disconnect between 'official' print or radio news-speak and the manner of discussing politics which takes place literally on the street as this news is received, reproduced, disseminated and challenged.

A theoretical concern considered in regards to the application of critical discourse analysis for this project relates to implicit assumptions of relations of domination/subordination which are contained within the practice. Wodak describes the method as a strategy of 'demystifying ideologies of power through the systematic investigation of semiotic data...' (2007, 186), pointing towards a focus on the conscious and instrumental application of discourse by power holders over subordinate actors. Such an emphasis may be open to Mahmood's Foucaultian critique (2005) of liberal ontologies of agency which reify binaries of domination and resistance at the expense of broader conceptualisations of the multi-directional channels of power which structure a social context. A similar concern is highlighted in my discussion in Chapter four of recent Africanist analyses of the public sphere or 'civic' agency' and its apparent focus on 'resistance'.

The use of critical discourse analysis as a 'demystifying' tool thus implies that 'mystification' is an already executed strategy of power-holders. This is an assumption which privileges the concreteness of boundaries between different groups of actors and may overlook what Wedeen would describe as processes of shared-meaning reproduction (2008). This is not to suggest that disparities of power do not exist or that ideologies of instrumental mystification are not employed, but it does emphasise the fact that 'elite'/'ordinary' actor boundaries are often blurred in a variety of ways in the Somali public sphere(s) and that it is often the interplay between the production and reception of discourses of power (as opposed to their direct obfuscating effect) which serve to reproduce existing power relations.

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: 'grounding' a media methodology

These issues arise from the origins of critical discourse analysis in engagement with the mass-media technologies of industrialised economies (Fairclough 2001), and this must be appreciated when applying similar techniques to a non-Western setting. The context of media production in my research sites is markedly different in terms of the social penetration of technologies and state capacity for regulation, though it is important to recognize that sources of media are potentially no less globalised or diverse than those consumed, say, by the Somali diaspora in industrialised economies of Europe or North America. What is required is a 'critical' engagement with the connections between this patchwork of both locally produced and globally influential forms of media and sources of cultural orientation and political identification.

Another approach to critical discourse analysis - which remains sensitive to these problematically dominant liberal ontologies or reifications of resistance - is developed by Alshaer (2008) in his 'Culture of Communications' theory, employed in his analysis of media/literary products of Hamas in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (2009). This is particularly relevant for my chapter on Islamism in the public sphere as Alshaer's focus is on a movement whose communication strategy employs tropes of nationalist-historical struggle as well as themes of divinely sanctioned politico-religious governance. Building on Said's notions of the inseparability of language and culture and a Saussurian conception of language as sign (acoustic 'image' as arbitrary signifier and the signified 'concept'), this 'culture of communications...allows the recipients of communicative practices (referred to as audiences in media and communication studies) to recognize socio-political plurality and positionality within societies as well as the shared linguistic and cultural characteristics that a socio-linguistic community shares and reacts to' (Alshaer 2008, 102; cf. Bouissac 2010; Said 1994). This approach has proved helpful for my analysis of the relationship between discursive structuring and rhetorical intent found in the particular sample of ethno-nationalist Jihadi propaganda videos forming the starting point for Chapter five's discussion of Islamism within the public sphere. Here, I argue, that the 'socio-linguistic community' is both utilised and constructed with appeal to a number of discursive tropes which are not limited to this particular 'counter-public' but find expression across the wider Somali public sphere.

Evaluating the cultural, ideological or political 'representativeness' of media texts produced by numerous individuals in a diverse and fragmented public sphere, is a challenging endeavour. Chapter three reflects on the profiles of the cultural producers' whose work I analyse, as well as the technological context of their production. Nevertheless, from a methodological perspective, I note here my use of certain critical literary and cultural studies theories, namely notions of 'intertextuality', which have enabled me to conceptualise the relationships between the mass of data which has made up my sample, and which could be added to daily with innumerable new texts that enter into the arena of the Somali public sphere. Again building on Saussure and his notion of the arbitrary linguistic sign, as well as Bakhtin's notion of meaning as existing only within linguistic interaction between individuals of groups within specific social contexts (Medvedev & Bakhtin 1985, 120), theories of

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: ‘grounding’ a media methodology

intertextuality emphasise the inherent and inevitable relationship which exists between all communicative practices and the genres, structures, plots, modes of narrating, grammars and vocabularies of all previous works of literary production:

‘No longer the product of an author’s original thoughts, and no longer perceived as referential in function, the literary work is viewed not as the container of meaning but as a space in which a potentially vast number of relations coalesce. A site of words and sentences shadowed by multiple potentialities of meaning, the literary work can now only be understood in a comparative way, the reader moving outwards from the work’s apparent structure into the relations it possesses with other works and linguistic structures’. (Allen 2000, 12)

Limitations in my knowledge of the wider Somali literary canon no doubt prevent me from engaging with the full intertextual potential of the pieces I critically analyse. Nonetheless, I have found this wider approach to textual analysis helpful in its emphasis on the comparative: while individuals and their technological communicative contexts remain important to understand, my focus in subsequent chapters is more on the ways in which texts emerge from and interrelate with a wider public sphere of public discourse. My broader exposure to public discourse in Somali media and politics has given me a certain perspective on how texts correspond with such debates, and also where they may diverge from more ‘standard’ modes of address or argumentation.

On a practical level, I initially considered the use of different software packages (such as NVivo) to help organise my electronic text data sample (webpages, digital images, audio and video recordings) alongside field-notes and transcripts of interviews or focus groups (discussed below). Whilst there is scope for mass textual analysis within corpus linguistics (Schmied & Hudson-Ettle 1996, 166; Hardt-Mautner 1995) - i.e. the scanning of a large corpus for particular words, phrases, grammatical constructions –software currently doesn’t exist for this type of processing of Somali-language texts⁶. As such, my electronic archive has been built up of Windows folders/files corresponding to particular types of text. Each item within has been assigned a corresponding Word document which includes all background data (hyperlink, last date of access, date of creation, number of ‘hits’ or views etc.), a full English translation, and annotation in the form of comments alongside the text. Each Word file is then given multiple thematic or regional tags (‘Puntland’; ‘Islamism’; ‘Federalism’ etc.) to allow for easy access and organisation where necessary. This system for my text archive was later expanded to include field-notes from the ethnographic and interview/focus group stages of my data collection, a process I will outline below.

⁶ Nevertheless, Jama Muse Jama’s recent work on the Redsea Cultural Foundation’s Somali Corpus program (<http://www.somalicorpus.com/>) is indicative of efforts underway to develop electronic resources for statistical and morphological analysis of the Somali language, and raises the possibility for future quantitative research in this direction (Jama 2016).

2.4.2. Ethnography in the 'field': conversations and observation

My textual analyses have been supplemented by the results of different types of data-collection undertaken during fieldwork across Somalia in 2015. While experiences from Hargeysa and from my work across south-central Somalia and Puntland with the ICRC since 2009 have no doubt coloured my perspectives, the field data I employ in the subsequent chapters is drawn almost entirely from a six-month period of dedicated research across Hargeysa, Garoowe and Muqdisho in the first half of 2015. During this period and across these research sites (and also in Nairobi and London, and via Skype and email correspondence) I conducted 40 semi-structured interviews with media professionals, writers, government figures, and representatives of civil society and educational organisations (see subsequent footnotes and interview list in the appendix [3]). These interviews were facilitated through existing contacts of mine in NGO and higher educational circles in the three Somali research sites, as well as via direct contact through email with online and print news media content producers. The objectives of these interviews were to gain insight into the background and professional experiences of these journalists and their self-perceptions of the role of media in political processes across the different contexts. State representatives were interviewed on the basis of their official duties in regard to media (Ministers of Information, for example) or based on their particular utilisation of or relationship with media organisations or technologies. Civil society and educational professionals were interviewed on the basis of their media-related activities (for instance in journalism trade unions, or 'capacity-building' organisations) and I was interested in their perspectives on the wider media climate of the political centres studied.

The interviews were held in Somali in a variety of settings – hotels, offices, Government premises, cafes, universities – and after initial experimentation with audio recordings, I decided to dispense with the dictaphone and rely on shorthand notes which I would type up fully and with my own annotations immediately after each interview. Conversations (which, over tea, could last for hours) flowed more easily, and with more revealing data, when they were not being audio-recorded (Rubin & Rubin 2011). It was, of course, crucial in every case to make clear my position as a researcher and ascertain transmissibility of information. In the vast majority of cases the informants did not take up my offer of anonymity, although in a few instances I have concealed names on purpose where I have felt that there is even a small chance that sensitive information has been exposed. The reality of the ongoing conflict, particularly in Muqdisho, and dangers faced daily by journalists (discussed in the subsequent chapter) necessitated a perhaps overly cautious approach to the nominal transmission of information and the extensive anonymising of sources.

In addition to these interviews and during the same period of fieldwork in the first half of 2015, I also conducted 9 focus groups (each with between 6-14 student participants) in Puntland State University (Garoowe), Gollis University (Hargeysa) and the University of Muqdisho. In these higher education institutions I also distributed Somali language questionnaires (of my own design) and received 325 responses. The purpose of these focus groups and questionnaires was to gather data from

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: 'grounding' a media methodology

a younger generation (with no prior experience of the pre-1991 Somali state) on their media-consumption habits and their perceptions of media capacity, influence and neutrality. I was interested in the range of media technologies and sources that young people in the different contexts used, reasons behind these preferences and their opinions regarding different types of media production and potential (or actual) state regulation. Data here also came from interaction amongst peers and possible divergences of opinion around some of the weightier questions (Kitzinger 1994). All of the participants appeared to take the focus groups very seriously and were keen to articulate their views clearly.

Three of the focus groups were conducted with students in journalism faculties and thus included individuals who had been or were working in the industry. The remaining groups were composed of male and female undergraduate students selected at random - the Universities' administrations helped me with this selection and the distribution of questionnaires. In all interactions with students (in person and in writing) I was careful to emphasise my role as a researcher, to explain my research questions and give respondents an opportunity to contact me and later receive feedback on the outcome of my project. All of the focus groups were held in Somali, recorded and transcribed, and participants did not state their names. Observations derived from these focus groups and questionnaire data are included across the different chapters to add context to the media environment or technologies described. The sample questionnaire (Somali with an English translation) and aggregated data is included in the appendix (4 & 5).

Conducting field research in Somalia is a challenging and potentially dangerous undertaking and I am grateful to my numerous informants, friends and former colleagues for their support and assistance (see acknowledgments). Hargeysa is fairly easy place to insert oneself as an independent researcher, and my prior contacts and experience in the city allowed me to stay in a range of different hotels, and move freely around the city to meet different informants. Garoowe and Muqdisho are more sensitive environments and my periods of fieldwork there depended on advice and assistance from professional contacts based there.

Garoowe is generally considered to be a stable and relatively secure city, although its modest size and its role as centre of the Puntland administration mean that a foreign outsider requires good local contacts to help secure a visa, to gain permission from the authorities to undertake research, and to avoid suspicion from intelligence and security agencies located there. In Garoowe I conducted most interviews in the hotel I was staying at, but was able to spend most working afternoons at the University interacting with staff and students, and travel to different government and NGO offices to meet informants. I was also able to attend different events and functions held at the University (Puntland Government affiliated) and observe political news media in action in those settings.

Muqdisho provided another distinct set of challenges due to the continued occurrence of militant attacks and assassinations, as well as the perennial risk of kidnapping. This is not a city in which a white, foreign researcher can simply jump in a taxi, cruise around and meet with informants.

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: ‘grounding’ a media methodology

Again, based on my previous experience in Muqdisho and my existing contacts, I was able to identify a particular hotel in which I could base myself. I knew (and was known to) the local security company responsible for the hotel, and I was confident that it was not a potential primary target of militants (unlike many other hotels which have been attacked). The hotel was in close proximity to my former workplace and, importantly, was located *inside* the city. Accommodation usually used by foreigners at the secure airport ‘Green Zone’ would have been problematic in that informants would have been much less likely to be able to visit me there. I emphasise the importance of the hotel *milieu* in the context of the Somali public sphere in the following chapter, and suffice to say that whilst most of my time in Muqdisho was spent in this fairly restricted environment, this location itself provided interesting opportunities to meet a wide range of individuals as both solicited and unsolicited informants.

Each of my research trips from Nairobi required a great deal of forward planning and careful consideration of security restraints. Despite the occurrence - in the parlance of the INGO world - of certain unanticipated ‘security incidents’ (contextualised themselves below and in the following chapter for their own value to my data collection), I was nonetheless able to meet my fieldwork objectives. The importance of properly articulating one’s identity as an academic researcher in the context was brought home to me not only by the tangibility of political violence but also the prevalence of narratives of foreign intrigue and conspiracy in the public sphere – a propensity that is in itself a subject of my research. In this regard, I recall the novel experience of having an account of my interview with the (then) Governor of Mudug region (Puntland) posted, by him, on his Facebook page for his ‘friends’ to discuss. This was illuminating for me in regards to popular perceptions of a foreign researcher. Several of those who left comments on the post suggested that I might be a spy, with one individual countering by pointing that if I was actually an intelligence agent I would have likely concealed my Somali linguistic competence.

In other ways, and throughout the data-collection process, I have considered questions of reflexivity and the impact that the researcher’s physical presence in the fieldwork site (or prior prejudices and proclivities) has on the quality of the data collected (Fine 1993; Jenkins 1994). In one sense, the prominence of textual sources within my data set is a response to these types of concerns: the fear that informants’ discussions with me around socio-cultural or religious politics would be coloured by our differing identities and positionalities. This was a feeling I often had when I interacted (as a teacher, in a particular position of power) with students during my time working at the University of Hargeysa. I would frequently ask myself how my students’ expressions of their attitudes on issues ranging from Somaliland’s independence efforts to the role of religion in democratic politics were influenced by my identity as a foreign, non-Somali, non-Muslim interlocutor, and the extent to which these opinions might be articulated in different ways within entirely Somali contexts of debate or activism.

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: 'grounding' a media methodology

A related consideration, particularly relevant in the field of media studies, is the tendency for researcher/researched roles to be switched – when one interviews people who make their living interviewing others it is not uncommon for the researcher to begin to start answering more questions than s/he is asking. As such, I often became the subject of separate interviews almost as a *quid pro quo* for my access to media offices and studios⁷. Wolfe describes this as the tendency for 'the contexts of discussion and analysis to travel across discursive boundaries of academia, popular culture, scientific discourse and cultural encounter' (1997, 55).

Focusing on texts would thus largely allow for me to remove myself from the equation and enable me to interpret material explicitly designed for an audience in which I was not included. Taking the step back to identify the parameters of this producer/audience relationship (i.e. the very nature of the public sphere) has therefore become an important objective of the project. The other practical reason for relying on a sample of media texts was the fear that a change in the security situation might severely limit my ability to conduct fieldwork and so this data set would be something I could fall back to if that proved to be the case. With the above considerations in mind I often designed my interview and focus group questioning along seemingly more neutral, non-ideological, prosaic or practical themes regarding media production or consumption. Whilst conversations would often veer into normative ground, I would continue to emphasise the practical and technological aspects of my research project, whilst making clear to participants that I was also analysing specific media texts (on which they might express opinions or offer suggestions).

A textual focus does not in itself, of course, preclude the influence of the biases or prejudices of the researcher who undertakes discursive analysis. My primary concern here has been the potential influence on text selection of subjective emotional engagement with the research context and experiences derived from fieldwork itself. Being a potential target of, and actual witness to, the types of political violence discussed in the thesis has had an unavoidable emotional impact on me, as a researcher. I have had to consider carefully the extent to which these experiences either add valuable first-hand perspective and reflection to the analysis or, problematically, contribute to a sensationalisation of the narrative and a shift of the research focus away from a more representative picture of political life in the context. Whilst it is impossible to say with certainty to which of these poles my account has swung, the very recognition of the possibility of the negative implications of the latter helps mitigate its influence in the writing.

Experiencing the violence that affects a large number of the producers of news media in Somalia (and the wider population, particularly somewhere like Muqdisho) allows the researcher both to share something with his respondents, but it can also underscore how differently these experiences can be interpreted, handled and *lived with*, by those who are socially embedded in this environment in the way that he/she is not. I remember, vividly, entering my former workplace compound in

⁷ Media interest in me usually centred on my Somali language abilities and experiences.

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: 'grounding' a media methodology

Muqdisho as an AS attack was underway against the Ministry of Higher Education, meters away across the street. With bullets literally whistling overhead I came across a group of ladies - the domestic staff of the compound who I knew well - sitting outside the kitchen drinking tea. As I flinched with every round passing through the air above, they greeted me with big, relaxed smiles, asking me how I was, and how my family were back in the UK. A week later I was in Garoowe, sitting in the hotel garden restaurant the evening after a suicide bomber had blown himself up and (bits of him, at least) into the compound. Drinking tea with the other guests we discussed a picture on one of their phones of the bomber's head which we had seen being collected along with other body parts in a plastic bucket from the cafeteria that morning - 'just look at his nose', one of my companions pointed out to me, 'he's not from around here, definitely a Kenyan Somali'.

These anecdotes may have limited analytical value for any argument I make in the following chapters, however they serve here to underscore the multiple and unexpected (from my perspective) ways that people experience, process and reflect on violence. I cannot pretend to have provided in subsequent analyses any kind of systematic sociology of these responses and I merely point out here that 'audience' reactions to directly experienced violence and its mediated transmission are unpredictable and varied. It has been valuable for me to experience first-hand an event (like a militant group's attack) and then subsequently 'consume' it through the media and within the public sphere that I am studying (Fordred 1997). As I argue in subsequent chapters, the public sphere does not merely serve as the vehicle by which events are disseminated but instead can play a role itself in shaping the communications preferences of actors (from their verbal or written statements to acts of performative violence) who understand its technological and discursive parameters and the rhetorical opportunities it facilitates. It must also be recognised that media the world over may 'sensationalise' violence (or direct focus towards it and away from other types of event), and an analysis of media production may inevitably do likewise to that political context. Once again, these concerns have remained in the background to the subsequent case studies, and I have endeavoured to elaborate on them at different points where appropriate and of analytical value.

2.5. Conclusion: reflexivity, knowledge production and narrative politics

This methodology has attempted to justify the specific rationale behind text sampling and to demonstrate the relevance of analysis of certain types of media product amongst the clamour of the public sphere: a media environment both created and utilised by innumerable individuals identifying as 'Somalis' in a wide variety of political contexts. Ultimately, the greatest challenge for this discussion of reflexivity is to justify how I, as a foreign, non-Somali researcher, am in an appropriate position to mediate a sample of these voices and present accurately a variety of different political arguments. To the credit of its proponents, the *#Cadaanstudies* movement has distanced itself from the type of critique that focuses on a one-dimensional appreciation of researcher identity. The 'whiteness' of scholarship in this discourse refers not to the identity of individual actors, but rather the

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: 'grounding' a media methodology

complex web of power relations (from structural impediments to entry into academia, to the highest levels of security policy making) that influence the production of knowledge on a 'Somali' subject. I have presented above my own experience in the Somali Horn of Africa which in various contexts has overlapped with this particular nexus of power and information politics.

I do not argue that I sit in some particular position of neutral objectivity, allowing me to advance comparative theoretical arguments beyond the reach of other more 'culturally' or politically embedded (Somali) commentators. Whilst I have reflected above on the potential influence of my own experiences on my scholarship, the reality of this impact may be beyond my own subjective perception. I present here my background to the reader and allow him/her to judge accordingly. Nevertheless, I have been privileged with experiences of working and living in various locations across the Somali territories which are rarely afforded to foreigners. I have been exposed to multiple perspectives on the political identity of Somali statehoods and, at the same time, I hold no particular connection or affiliation to any political actor or agenda.

This is a necessary observation to make. The combined reality of extreme political fragmentation and the persistence of foreign interference in Somali affairs, has produced a public sphere of debate which is highly sensitive to the ulterior motives of commentators⁸. Even the *#Cadaanstudies* movement itself became a subject of suspicion and was drawn into the realm of narrative contestation between political actors in Somalia. Originating as it did in a discussion of the 'Somaliland Journal of African Studies' (which had no Somali representation on its editorial or advisory board), some (Somali) commentators perceived the campaign to be conspiring in its critique against the Republic of Somaliland and its independent political agenda⁹.

In a different vein, the development of *#Cadaanstudies* commentary itself advances particular conceptualisations of 'Somali' identity in its idioms of activism, themselves influential in debates over the cultural homogeneity/heterogeneity of the Somali 'nation'. Some of these arguments require the presentation of a relatively concrete 'Somali' identity. They can also be seen to appropriate many of the tropes of the anti-colonial nationalism which itself emphasised the type of reductive homogeneity critiqued by a more recent generation of scholars. An example here is the utilisation of the *Maandeeq* motif to name an affiliated podcast, that mythical she-camel of the post-colonial nationalist poetic discourse. *Maandeeq*, however, as Ahmed points out, was an idiom with far greater resonance for the largely pastoral north than those Somalis (primarily in the inter-riverine south) who did not derive their wealth from camels (1996, 13). The adoption of the motif into nationalist mythology thus played a role within processes which promoted pastoral cultural hegemony as a signifier of Somali nation state identity.

⁸ Liban Ahmed, February 4, 2015, 'Biased Somali scholars eclipse warlords' The Daily Nation, Nairobi <http://www.nation.co.ke/oped/Opinion/Somalia-Intellectuals-Scholars-Diaspora-Disinformation/-/440808/2613300/-/lg1a5s/-/index.html>

⁹ Mohamed Hagi Mahamoud, 'The conspiracy scheme of Cadaanstudies' Somaliland Monitor, May 17, 2015 <http://somalilandmonitor.net/somaliland-the-conspiracy-scheme-of-cadaan-studies/4384/>

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: ‘grounding’ a media methodology

In fairness to the creators of the podcast, mention was (briefly) made of this potentially contested idiom, and the *#Cadaanstudies* movement remains in its early stages of engagement with the wider field Somali studies. What is of note, however, is that tensions inherent in constructing a ‘Somali’ identity as a vehicle to critique external power structures can also be seen in the application of Somali nationalist rhetoric in the context of political reconfiguration in Somalia itself. This is a theme I move onto in my analysis of news media texts in the chapters below. As above, the discursive parameters of the online and academic debate come to overlap with areas of contestation over ‘Somali’ identity, re-engaged in contemporary expressions of statehood and political authority. These observations are not meant as criticisms of the movement (and the former charge of anti-Somaliland intent is a misrepresentation of the aims of the campaign), but are simply intended to highlight the inevitability of such narrative contestation within the particular political environment of the modern Somali public sphere.

In reflexively considering my own motivations for knowledge production on Somalia, I also come to an appreciation of what might be termed a ‘thin constructivist’ ontological interpretation (Wendt 1999; Shotter 1993) of the relationship between ideological and material determinants of agency, relevant for both the ‘objects’ of my study *and myself*. I write this thesis with the genuine intent of contributing something of analytical value on the dynamics of identity across the Somali territories, providing context and nuance to understandings of how and why people across this region perceive, experience and comment on their political reality in different ways related to the reimagining or reconstruction of Somali statehoods. At the same time, the preparation and writing of the thesis represents a professional stepping stone, important for me to develop a potential career in academia. These are material, mercenary considerations which are, I contend, hardwired into the mindset of most young scholars working in the Western academy. Similarly, working for the ICRC across the Somali territories I was genuinely motivated and inspired by the humanitarian impulse to provide tangible help to people in dire need. I was willing to accept and manage the risk of working in a conflict environment because I believed (and still believe) in the value of the Red Cross’s genuine commitment to neutrality and impartial action; something that cannot simply be taken for granted in a context where political, security and humanitarian agendas frequently overlap. At the same time, the ICRC paid me a (good) salary, and I can hardly claim that this was something of no importance to me.

How different am I from the young AS recruit who accepts risk, potential (or certain, planned) death because he *believes* in an ideology and worldview, but *also* because this organisation pays him to fight with a regularity not matched by other political-military actors? Here the constant interaction of the ideological and the material renders meaningless any attempted extrapolation of a ‘pure’ conceptualisation of motivation to agency. As the Somali President has argued, AS may fight

2. Cadaan studies and Soomaali studies: 'grounding' a media methodology

for money¹⁰ (a 2015 'market rate' of \$20 paid to youngsters per grenade thrown at an AMISOM checkpoint, according to world on the street in Muqdisho), but this does not preclude genuine belief and particular forms of ideological or cultural identification. This, for some individuals, is enough to drive them to a willing military suicide.

The purpose of this observation is to foreground reflexivity through full disclosure. I do not sit outside of power structures critiqued by the *#Cadaanstudies* movement, nor can I fully escape the battlefield of narrative politics that characterises contestation over the state in the Somali public sphere. I can, however, embed recognition of these contexts into my subsequent chapters, further 'grounding' my critical discourse analysis and other mixed qualitative methods. The very fact that these two arenas of discussion around Somali 'knowledge production' overlap further testifies to the dynamism, fluidity and inherent transnationalism of the public sphere itself - a subject of research I have been drawn to by personal experience, happenstance, as well as various structures and relations of power.

¹⁰ Salon, February 14, 2016 'Somalia's president: Many fight for al-Shabab for money'
http://www.salon.com/2016/02/14/somalias_president_many_fight_for_al_shabab_for_money/

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

3.1. Introduction

On November 1, 2015, the day before I first put pen to paper for this chapter, Harakat Al Shabaab Al Mujahideen (AS) launched a ‘complex attack’ on the Saxafi Hotel in the heart of Muqdisho, near the KM4 junction and opposite the Somali Police Force’s Criminal Investigation Directorate. In grimly familiar fashion a AS suicide squad initiated the attack with a car bomb at the hotel’s fortified gate, opening an access point through which the fighters entered. In the hours of chaos that followed the gunmen moved through the hotel killing their targets: politicians, members of state security or military forces, ‘infidels, apostates and spies’, and other ‘ordinary’ bystanders, before eventually being overwhelmed by National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) special forces - the elite and US-trained Gaashaan (‘Shield’) unit for whom hotel siege-breaking has become something of an operational speciality. Four other hotels in Muqdisho have been attacked in a similar manner since 2014.

Saxafi means ‘journalist’ in Somali and whilst media workers were not the direct targets here (and they often *are* the direct targets of violence in Somalia) members of the profession were directly affected. Shabelle Media photographer Mustafe Cabdinuur Shafaaa – friend and colleague to informants of mine in Muqdisho – was killed as the car he hid next to while covering the events exploded: a second bomb detonated remotely targeting security forces rushing to the scene. As events unfolded a AS spokesman made direct contact with BBC Journalist Mary Harper to confirm their responsibility for the assault¹ and as the battle was raging pro-AS Radio Al Andalus recorded an interview with the fighters inside the hotel shortly before their apparent ‘martyrdom.’²

The location, space, symbolic significance and general milieu of hotels in Somalia and Somaliland have been central to both the practical and theoretical development of this thesis and my conceptualisation of the ‘public sphere’ in these contexts. Each location of my fieldwork, whether Muqdisho, Garoowe or Hargeysa, brought different considerations, and constraints for research, and yet what was consistently confirmed was the significance of ‘hotel culture’ for the production and consumption of media products, as well as the often blurred boundaries between the state and civil society that were visible in these settings. This account of the Saxafi Hotel attack presents an extreme but not uncharacteristic example of the importance of such locations in the particular security and

¹ Mary Harper *Twitter* post, November 1, 2015, https://twitter.com/mary_harper; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-34745495>

² Andalus Radio, November 1, 2015, ‘*Idaacadda Andalus Oo Baahisay Codad Laga Duubay Walaalihii Fuliyeey Howlgalkii Hotel Saxafi (WARBIXIN+COD)*’ [Andalus Radio broadcasts recording of the brothers who carried out the Hotel Saxafi operation - Report and Voice] <http://radioandalus24.com/?p=5709> (accessed November 3, 2015)

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

state-reconstruction context of Muqdisho, and hints at the role of journalists and media technologies on the dynamic battlefield of Somali politics. These locations hold intense political, social and moral significance for different actors in the city and are multifaceted sites of media production and consumption – both in the sense of the workings and recordings of elite politics, as well as their manifestation as spectacular theatres of performative violence and contestation for the state itself.

This chapter provides a comparative ethnography of media production and consumption across the three different political centres in which I conducted fieldwork. If the subsequent three chapters discursively analyse media texts then the work of this chapter is to ground this material in particular environments of media production and consumption. The chapter gives an overview of Somali public spheres first in terms of media technologies and the networks that utilise this communicative infrastructure. This is followed by a discussion of ‘individuals’: elite and non-elite producers of media across the different political contexts. Before shifting the focus to media consumers and sites of public sphere activity, the account interrogates aspects of a ‘cultural’ politics of journalistic form and language. The chapter comes to its conclusion by way of reflection on the (often fraught) relationships between media production and political authorities in the context of state reconstruction or reconfiguration.

This chapter argues that Somali media technologies have developed in the context of extreme political fragmentation, privatisation and inherent trans-nationalism, and have created an environment in which multiple discourses of contested Somali ethno-religious nationalist identity can be operationalised by various actors. This analysis relies on a two-sided conceptualisation of the public sphere. Here, one ‘level’ of the public sphere operates within these political centres serving as ‘capitals’ of separate, if interlinked, political projects. Local media constructs a political environment around these administrative centres, discursively relating and defining themselves vis-à-vis the wider ‘Somali’ political context.

At the same time, there exists a wider trans-national ‘Somali’ media environment, characterised by ‘international’ Somali language broadcasters, whether Somali-branches of foreign media organisations such as the BBC or VOA, or private diaspora-run broadcasters such as Universal TV. The fact that such networks have both the technical capacity and audience appeal across all of the territories in question is highly significant for state actors attempting to discursively legitimise their different political projects or identities. It is the interplay between these spheres which allows a broadly homogenising conception of Somali ethno-religious or cultural identity to coexist with multiple presentations of normatively defined political community. Somali ‘nationalism’ - far from being irrelevant in this context of fragmentation – is of crucial importance in this dynamic marketplace of cultural, ideological and political entrepreneurs.

There is much scholarship which focuses on identity and ideology in the diaspora (McGown 1999, Collet 2007, Kusow & Bjork 2007, Issa-Salwe 2008, Osman 2015, Abdi 2015). This chapter adjusts the analytical lens to explore how the transnational existence of a popularly defined *Ummadda*

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

Soomaaliyeed (the Somali Ummah, a globally-conceived ethno-religious community) feeds into the public sphere of media production and consumption in Somalia itself, and the implications this has for political reconfiguration and new emergences of ‘Somali’ sovereignty or statehood.

3.2.1. Producers: technologies and networks

The news media market across the contemporary Somali Horn is characterised by great diversity and fragmentation – an environment which mirrors the socio-political splintering of the territories which, prior to 1991, made up the unitary nation-state of Somalia. Radio, television, print and online news are the primary means of information transmission, though their relative prevalence or importance varies across the different political or economic centres explored here.

Radio broadcasting – and external media influence - has great historical pedigree in Somalia. The British powers in the Somaliland Protectorate first introduced military radio broadcasting from Hargeysa, which from 1942 morphed into Radio Kudu featuring BBC news bulletins in Somali, English and Arabic. The BBC Somali Service started broadcasting in 1957 and was established, in part, to compete with Nasser-led Egypt’s anti-colonial messaging carried on Radio Cairo to the territories. Consumption of material through this medium has long been popular across the far-flung territories predominantly inhabited (at a low population density) by nomadic pastoralists. The importance of news transmission for those engaged in such livelihoods so susceptible to climatic or environmental shocks, or the restrictions on movement that conflict can bring, has long been noted in the literature to explain the social importance of radio broadcasting in Somalia (Adam 2001). While the younger urban generation might regard radio as the medium of their parents or grandparents – becoming obsolete in the internet age – radio technology and broadcasting continues to be the most accessible means of receiving information for a majority of the population in both urban and rural settings. Indeed, even surveying this younger generation (a sample of university students in Muqdisho, Garoowe and - to a lesser extent - Hargeysa) confirmed their perception that radio remained a prevalent form of media in ‘their neighbourhoods’³.

The perception that radio remains the primary media of the masses also explains how political authorities across the territories relate to producers in this sector and, as we shall see below, it is often radio broadcasters who are affected most frequently and most acutely by states’ sporadic or persistent attempts at control or censorship. This is most notable, in a formalised sense, in Somaliland where private FM radio broadcasting is prohibited, the state fearing the proliferation of broadcasters representing highly sectional clan constituencies (Stremlau 2013). By comparison, in Muqdisho there are (as of mid 2015) around 30 FM stations broadcasting daily, though these networks face their own

³ In Muqdisho and Garoowe a majority of students identified radio as the most important or most-used form of news media in their neighbourhoods (with television a close second). In Hargeysa however television was regarded as being most prevalent followed by internet news (See Appendix 5). This is perhaps reflective of economic development in Hargeysa (and higher average incomes) as well as the effect of state control by the Somaliland authorities on the scope and extent of radio broadcasting.

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

constraints and are liable to appear and disappear in the market due to extremely fluid financing. It is important to emphasise that the profusion of FM stations in Muqdisho, whilst hinting at the societal diversity in the city, does not simply represent the emergence of a multitude of clan-specific radio mouthpieces. Certain stations may be based and have primary audiences in certain neighbourhoods (themselves made up of particular configurations of clan power relations), or they may be the result of business initiatives based around particular clan networks. However, the open affiliation of any broadcaster with a particular clan interest would be seen as illegitimate either by the wider public (to whom all the stations attempt to broadcast to) or by the state which remains highly sensitive to the capacity of radio to incite social unrest.

Across urban centres television is becoming a medium to rival radio in terms of prevalence and popularity. Satellite-connected TVs are standard features in practically all moderately affluent homes. They are not entirely absent even from some Internally Displaced Persons' (IDP) camps and their ubiquity in cheap cafes, restaurants or *mafrish* (qaat-chewing hangouts) means that they are an increasingly common means of receiving news and entertainment in private and public contexts. Often connected via receivers of content from the Arab world (Nilesat is particularly popular) the hundreds of receivable channels are predominantly in Arabic with religious broadcasts from Mecca or historical documentaries being popular. Films and drama may be of Hollywood-*esque* origin, filtered through Gulf-based networks, and Indian and Turkish dramas are also widely watched. International news channels - from the traditional 'western' BBC or CNN to the popular Al Jazeera English or Arabic and Russian or Iranian television news and comment (RTV, Press TV, respectively) – are frequently viewed, especially by more affluent audiences who have the requisite linguistic competencies and, perhaps, life experience in the diaspora.

Somali-language broadcasting only makes up a small proportion of the total number of (the hundreds of) channels available and is dominated by several big and usually diaspora-based networks such as Universal TV, Somali Channel, and Horn Cable. The output of these channels is often dominated by rolling news coverage of events in Somalia, issues affecting the global Somali community and major world news. Also common are topical or political debates and 'cultural' programming frequently composed of interviews with poets and singers, and recordings (often from the pre-1991 era) or music videos of their work. Punctuating all this, the globalised market that is the *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed* is continuously invoked in the seemingly endless stream of advertisements for everything from Somali doctors in St. Paul, to mattresses in Muqdisho or nappies in Nairobi.

Somali cyberspace is a vast and predominantly unregulated cultural space of information and entertainment production and dissemination. The rapid expansion of mobile telecommunications across the territories in the post state-collapse period is a topic that has been emphasised by numerous commentators, often those with an enthusiastic interest in the anarcho-capitalist development of private, cheap, efficient and widespread mobile connectivity (Feldman 2007, Nurhussein 2008). The high level of social penetration of mobile phones across society (crucially in urban *and* rural settings)

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

and the bypassing or effective jettisoning of older statist institutions of public communication (post and landline technologies) has brought with it an impressive infrastructure of internet connectivity in terms of cable, satellite and mobile points of access. Whilst internet cafes are still important centres for the (young) masses to get online and plug into these worlds of news-media, propaganda or social networking, the rapid expansion of mobile internet technology (in some places, like Hargeysa, operating at '4G' level) has meant that online activity is an increasingly private and personalised experience. The online realm, which encompasses and re-broadcasts the established mediums of radio and TV, is accessible through the ubiquitous smart phone, itself a primary status symbol and marker of communicative modernity. The development of the technology in this direction has implications for the ways in which news media is consumed and disseminated in the public sphere and also has the effect of gradually expanding levels of internet connectivity out of urban centres and into the hinterland.

The advertisement from Hargeysa below (Figure 3.1) illustrates this in its expressive presentation of a modern cultural archetype: the connected camel-herder; the urbanite who still maintains his connection with sources of wealth in the pastoral economy:



Fig. 3.1. Advertisement, Hargeysa, 2010. Author's photograph.

The online news media market is made up of hundreds or even thousands of localised news websites all competing for 'hits.' In the survey I conducted amongst my 325 university student respondents in Muqdisho, Garoowe and Hargeysa, when I asked the participants which Somali-language news website they used most often, I received 64 different answers. Whilst there are clearly certain news websites which are more popular in these different areas amongst this particular generation, the sheer number of possible news sources reflects what some interviewees described as 'hebel.com': the perceived phenomenon where *hebel hebel* (which I translate into the British-English vernacular as 'every so and so') has a personal 'news' website to propagate their views and/or generate revenue from advertising. Despite the multiplicity of competing online platforms and the

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

presence of a large number which represent very specific sectional views or constituencies, a significant proportion are updated consistently and regularly with breaking news and the uploading of various opinion pieces or analysis. This is indicative of the large numbers of people who are involved in these processes both in the diaspora – where many, but not all, websites are ‘hosted’ and where the website ‘owner’ may reside – and in Somalia where the site will employ a small number of journalists who may write exclusively for that site or act in a more freelance or ‘stringer’ capacity⁴.

A fairly relaxed attitude towards intellectual copyright allows for content to spread *click and paste*-style and multiply across different online platforms. Although some sites configure their pages to prevent the straightforward lifting of their copy, this practice is widely tolerated and rarely becomes a point of serious contention amongst the journalistic fraternity who often accept this as just ‘the way things are done’ to generate content and thus the hits important to the advertisers who provide a significant amount of the financing for such operations⁵.

Amongst this online milieu of news production there operate various internationally predominant social media platforms (Facebook and Youtube, for example). These sites intersect with private Somali news media production and provide multiple routes of access for individuals into the online environment. The way in which Somali media networks directly share their content on these platforms or the manner in which prominent politicians, intellectuals or activists use Facebook as a primary means of circulating opinion pieces, serves to blur the distinction in the Somali media environment between ‘social’ and ‘traditional’ or ‘professional’ media – a context which is already characterised by extreme fragmentation, privatisation and a lack of commercial or state media monopolies⁶. It is in the online world of Somali media production that the inherent transnationalisation of content and discourse is most obvious, and where the lines of ideological contestation for state and society are most stark.

The online realm is an important and dynamic battlefield on which multiple actors tap into globalised sources of information to provide comment and justification for action in regard to the reconfiguration of the Somali state. It is not uncommon, for instance, for pro-*Jihadi* media to cite online publications from major Western civil society groups, media organisations or think-tanks (Human Rights Watch, The Economist and International Crisis Group, for example) in order to make points either about the weakness or venality of the ‘apostate’ SFG or the continued resilience of AS

⁴ Interviews with website owners both in the diaspora and in Somalia (for example London May 27, 2015, Garoowe February 27, 2015) have indicated that this type of structure is common, even for larger, popular news websites which require much a much smaller staff in comparison to other types media broadcasting.

⁵ Interview with Mahamoud Abdi Jama, Head of Somaliland Journalists’ Association (SOLJA) (Hargeysa, May 5, 2015). Not everyone, of course, is comfortable with a normative acceptance of content-sharing (especially without attribution), especially those journalists with professional media experience outside of Somalia and who endeavour to produce what may be regarded as a ‘higher quality’ media product (Interview with Somali-origin journalist working with international and regional media organisations, May 13, 2015).

⁶ It is noteworthy how a prominent and well-renowned journalist such as Yuusuf Garaad (former head of BBC Somali Service) frequently uses his Facebook page as a means to disseminate opinion pieces, perhaps emphasising the independent and personal nature of the commentary.

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

forces⁷. At the other end of the spectrum, even the US Military has been in the business of running a Somali News website (not that one would know that from a cursory glance of its main page) where particular perspectives ('moderate voices') on the ongoing conflict and cultural-religious contestation are propagated⁸. In this manner the Somali public sphere must be conceptualised as a fundamentally transnational space, where the parameters for nationalist discourse are internationalised and make situate the 'Somalis' as an ethno-religious 'cultural' group in the global context.

There is a great deal of overlap between the style and content of online news production and the print media industry. In the post-colonial, pre-state collapse era, newspapers never enjoyed the status or coverage of radio due to the logistical difficulties inherent in their national distribution and the low levels of literacy in the written Somali script, itself only formalised (with great controversy) in 1972. During this period newspapers remained an elite, urban and state-controlled enterprise, epitomised by the nationalist mouthpiece of Barre's revolutionary regime, the *Xiddigta Oktoobar* (The October Star), published in Muqdisho.

State collapse was followed by a profusion of newspaper publishing in the capital. Stateless press freedom ran in parallel to the conflict that engulfed southern Somalia and the daily, weekly and monthly papers that emerged at this time often served as the mouthpieces of the various clan-based factions vying for control of the capital. For those young journalists who attempted to remain unaligned and provide objective news, the security situation was far from favourable. A journalist active at that time recalled that he and his colleagues were unable to print the clan-alignment of those militia that perpetrated acts of violence or kidnapping in the city for fear of retaliation and the looting of offices by bandits. The profusion of newspaper writing that corresponded with urban conflict in Muqdisho was not sustained through the subsequent period characterised, from the late 1990s, by a stateless status-quo of factional power-sharing and the initially *ad hoc* development of neighbourhood Islamic courts structures. By the time this evolved Islamic Courts Union administration had been overthrown by the Ethiopian invasion of 2006, virtually no newspapers were being printed, distributed or read in the city, wracked once again by intense urban warfare, this time between those foreign

⁷ Voice of Somalia.net, March 18, 2014, 'The Economist: Xasan Sheekh Si Musuq maasuq ah ayaa lagu soo doortay' [The Economist: Xasan Sheekh was elected through corrupt practices] <http://voiceofsomalia.net/2014/03/18/the-economist-xasan-sheekh-si-musuq-maasuq-ah-ayaa-lagu-soo-doortay/> ; Somalimemo.net, June 27, 2014, 'Hay'adda ICG Al Shabaab Muruqa iyo Maalka Soomaalida Ayay Hanteen Mana Laga Adkaan Karo Warbixin' [ICG Report states that Al Shabaab have muscle and finance of the Somalis and cannot be resisted] <http://somalimemo.net/articles/237/Hayadda-ICG-Al-Shabaab-Muruqa-iyo-Maalka-Soomaalida-Ayay-Hanteen-Mana-Laga-Adkaan-Karo-Warbixin> ; Somalimemo.net, October 26, 2015 'HRW Xad-gudub iyo Dayac daran ayay Wajahayaan Naafada Soomaaliya' [Human Rights Watch: abuse and neglect facing the disabled in Somalia] <http://somalimemo.net/articles/3757/HRWXad-gudub-iyo-Dayac-daran-ayay-Wajahayaan-Naafada-Soomaaliya>

⁸ Somali language *Sabahi* Online was run by the US Department of Defence (AFRICOM/Special Operations Command) before being taken offline in February 2015 apparently due to defunding in Congressional appropriations legislation: FCW ('The Business of Federal Technology') online: <https://fcw.com/articles/2015/02/13/african-web-sites.aspx>

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

occupying forces and the emergent AS⁹. In Muqdisho today at least 3 daily papers are published and other more substantial bi-weekly publications such as the *Xaqiiqa Times* have emerged. Publications such as the latter have been born out of the generally improved security situation that has accompanied the gradual consolidation of power of the Somali Federal Government in Muqdisho, and the increased investment that has flowed into the city as a result.

In Somaliland, namely Hargeysa, the fall of the acutely oppressive Barre regime, also precipitated a profusion of private newspaper printing. Unlike Muqdisho, however, the relatively peaceful development of new state authority allowed for this wave to be sustained. While virtually all of the very early post-1991 papers disappeared or were superseded by new titles, the newspaper market has nonetheless gone through continuous growth. In Hargeysa today, despite tighter profit margins and competition from online news, around 13 papers are published daily or weekly¹⁰.

Garoowe's newspaper market is significantly less active than either Hargeysa's or Muqdisho's. Despite being the political centre of the Puntland administration, Garoowe lacks the aura of economic dynamism that either of those cities enjoy. Puntland's economic capital is the port city of Bosaaso, and the relatively few papers (such as *Kaaha Bari*) that make it to Garoowe are printed there.

In categorising the media networks that operate across the different technological formats and commercial markets outlined above, it is possible to distinguish between four main types of Somali producers. Firstly, there are private local media companies whose range of broadcast is limited to specific urban centres and regional territories (websites that fall into this category are, of course, accessible anywhere but tend to have geographically focused readerships). Whilst this type of network may have financing or even staff or management in the diaspora, it is important to distinguish such operations from the second category in this typology which refers to the big diaspora-headquartered television stations. These, crucially, have 'national' coverage and a broad viewership - the archetype here is the London-based Universal TV which is popular across the territories in question. Similar to the latter in terms of scope and broad appeal - but distinct in their management structures and relationship with 'international' media - are the Somali services of the British Broadcasting Corporation and the Voice of America, primarily accessed online and via radio, broadcast through dedicated shortwave frequencies or on the numerous private FM networks. Finally a fourth category could be labelled as 'state' media, referring to the television or radio broadcasting of the Somali Federal Government (Somali National Television/Radio Mogadishu), the Puntland State of Somalia (Puntland Television) and the Republic of Somaliland (Somaliland National Television/Radio Hargeysa). These stations consider themselves distinct from private media, carry the government line

⁹ Email correspondence with current editor of Muqdisho newspaper (February 2015).

¹⁰ Interview with Mahamoud Abdi Jama, Head of Somaliland Journalists' Association [SOLJA] (Hargeysa, May 5, 2015).

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

and undertake educational broadcasting. In some cases they also receive direct foreign assistance from donor governments¹¹.

3.2.2. Producers: individuals

Local, private news media is a commercial enterprise and many broadcasters in different formats have been established by businessmen as sideline projects with capital derived from other sources. This type of entrepreneur often has links with the state, either in its current form or through a position held in a previous government – and frequently the commercial/governmental distinction is highly blurred¹². An older generation of journalists (often with professional experience in the diaspora or with international media organisations) is often linked with the establishment of new private media enterprises in Somalia¹³. Civil society ‘activists’ are another group prominent in managing stations, especially those which receive funding for international humanitarian agencies or syndicated content from dedicated humanitarian broadcasters such as *Radio Ergo*¹⁴.

Cabdishakuur Mire Aadan was one particular individual media producer, whose life and work intersected on numerous - almost uncanny - levels with my research into the Somali public sphere and politics. I initially came across Mire Aadan through reading a serialisation of his book *Kobocii Islaamiyiinta Soomaaliya 1952-2002* (‘The rise of the Somali Islamists 1952-2002’) in the *Xaqiiqa Times* newspaper in Muqdisho. Whilst the academic referencing left something to be desired, the book represented a detailed Somali-language account of a highly contested history and I was interested to see how Islamist mobilisation was discursively presented to a Somali audience.

Mire Aadan was born in Muqdisho where he graduated from the Maritime High School and went on to work with the Ministry of Fisheries during the Barre era. After the civil war erupted he, like many who traced their lineage within the Daarood clan-family, moved north to what would become Puntland where he established the *Ilays* newspaper and *Radio Midnimo* in Bosaaso. From the early 2000s Mire Aadan took various positions within the Puntland Government including deputy Minister of Information and during this period he produced *Kobocii Islaamiyiinta* whose second edition would be published in 2013.

¹¹ Puntland TV received significant financial, material and technical assistance in its establishment from the Italian Government (Interview with Abdifatah Askar, Director of PLTV, Garoowe, March 3, 2015). This type of support is indicative of the manner in which some foreign states are willing to engage with (officially) sub-state administrations to build governance capacity (with a clear focus on security concerns and counter piracy/terrorism).

¹² Examples of businessmen/politicians abound as owners of media broadcasters: see in Muqdisho famous businessman and MP Cadow Cali Gees (Radio Maanta) or former (TFG) Minister of Information Dahir Geele (*Risala Radio*).

¹³ Yusuf Xasan, editor and founder of the *Xaqiiqa Times* newspaper in Muqdisho (formerly of the BBC) is a good example of the former type of media professional (Interview, Muqdisho, April 9, 2015).

¹⁴ Interview with program manager and producer Radio Ergo, Nairobi, May 13, 2015 (*Radio Ergo* is a non-profit humanitarian station funded by various foreign donors, including UNOCHA’s Common Humanitarian Fund).

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

Aside from this work, Mire Aadan was a regular writer in his own publications and in the broader public sphere. The last piece of his I read was a self-published Facebook post entitled *Ibiyihii Wargaysyada Muqdisho* ('The newspaper seller of Muqdisho'¹⁵). In the piece he describes an encounter with a boy selling newspapers at the cafe in which he is drinking coffee with other men. Despite the scorn of his companions the writer engages the boy in conversation and buys him a cup of tea that he would never have been able to afford on his own (\$1!). The writer laments at the poverty and lack of opportunities of the boy ('who was decreed by Allah to have been born Somali') and comments on the attitude of the elites (MPs, businessmen whose children live in diaspora) with whom he is sitting. 'What shocked me the most' he notes 'is that little Cabdiraxman was met not with compassion but suspicion: much of the talk was about whether he had been sent [to the hotel] by 'the children' [The Shabaab]'¹⁶. The piece is accompanied by a picture of a young newspaper vendor. The writer comments at the bottom that the picture was not taken in Muqdisho, as he would fear for the safety of the boy. Muqdisho, he says, is characterised by fear (*'Muqdisho waa la isaga garaabaa cabsida'*).

On February 20, 2015, Cabdishakuur Mire Aadan was killed in an AS attack on the city's Central Hotel, along with up to 24 others. I had intended to meet him in Muqdisho the following month but was left instead with his last piece of public writing, a poetic and portentous *tweet*: '*waa la guuray... waxaa loo guurayaa dooga iyo meesha daruurta roobku ka hilaacday ee indhaha u roon*' ('One is on the move, to the place of greenery and where the rainclouds give lighting which is a delight to the eyes'). It is a scene of pastoral idyll, where the thunder clouds are a sign of *Jaano* (Paradise) rather than something to be feared. Aside from this grimly prophetic reading, this social media statement says much about this type of public intellectual, businessman, politician and Somali nationalist: at once highly conversant in the different media technologies of modern Somalia and adept in the poetic idiom of 'traditional' and prestigious communication. The bitter irony of his death notwithstanding (killed by political descendents of the Islamist activism and militancy he himself had documented), Mire Aadan's career, work and demise is – based on my experience and meetings in the context – representative of many other elite media actors and the circumstances, possibilities and constraints of the public sphere.

Before the settings of that public sphere are elaborated on, it is necessary to introduce media workers at the other end of that professional spectrum: individuals whose profiles are not so prestigious, but who may also be victims of (different kinds) of violence. Providing content on the ground for the multiple media networks described above are the local journalists operating in the various distinct urban political contexts. Journalism is, by and large, a young man's game and

¹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=948561345172073&set=a.122990087729207.15523.100000546487399&type=1> (November 1, 2014)

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

although female journalists are active – including on dedicated stations committed to female rights and empowerment such as Kasmu FM in Muqdisho – the majority of correspondents in the field are male. Women are often visible (or audible) as presenters on local TV or radio whereas men tend to be overrepresented in ‘front-line’ news collection, due to a combination of factors including potentially challenging security situations, the male dominance of the political field (the most common topic of reportage), as well as socio-cultural or religiously-articulated norms which restrict women’s wider role in different forms of employment, including journalism¹⁷.

A dominant perception that I encountered time and again from consumers of media across the territories in question was that the vast majority of young men entering the journalistic profession lacked a suitable, basic educational background and the skills to do the job properly. Many respondents in the focus groups I held in universities in Hargeysa, Garoowe and Muqdisho (including some who had been or were part-time journalists themselves) believed that journalism was a field often entered by un/under-qualified young men with few other prospects in the local job market. Perceiving the prerequisites for entry into a career in journalism to be possession of a mobile phone (on which to make contacts and record interviews) and an internet connection, many young journalists were said to be ill-equipped to deal with the different situations that they might encounter in complex political, commercial and security environments. Whilst it is difficult to quantify the accuracy of such perceptions, I do document and analyse examples of journalistic malpractice later in this Chapter. What was striking, however, was the link drawn by media consumers or other media professionals between young journalists’ skills (or their propensity to ‘make mistakes’) and the potential for them to be targeted or caught up in violence.

Somalia is one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a journalist. The National Union of Somali Journalists (*Ururka Qaranka Suxufiyiinta Soomaaliyeed*/NUSOJ) documents various forms of violence perpetrated against journalists across the territories covered by this thesis. Somaliland, of course, has its own Journalists’ organisations (as does Puntland). However, NUSOJ’s publications attempt to maintain the notion of a ‘national’ (i.e. Somali) group of media workers and their reportage covers all territories regardless of the organisation’s general lack of official physical presence in the secessionist northwest. Even more notable than the attempted recreation of the juridical fiction of a unified ‘Somalia’, the 2014 NUSOJ annual report also includes alleged violations against ethnic Somali journalists inside Ethiopia. Here the ‘national’ encompasses an ethnic solidarity amongst a journalistic fraternity, a practical example of the trans-border sensibility of the popular ethno-political imagination that is the subject of the wider thesis.

This chapter has already made mention of the killings of two media professionals in 2015, and NUSOJ’s aforementioned 2014 report details the killings of 5 journalists in that year, as well as

¹⁷ I attended a meeting between Somaliland Journalists’ Association representatives and around 10 female journalists (all working in radio or television broadcasting) where these types of issues and restrictions were raised and discussed (SOLJA Offices, Hargeysa, May 7, 2015).

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

the wounding of 7 and the arrest or detention of 47 others¹⁸. Whilst the focus of this thesis is not press freedom itself, I have examined the ways in which journalists and violence or restrictions against them are perceived within the public sphere of media production and consumption. This, I argue, has an impact upon the reception of the material discursively analysed in subsequent chapters.

In the interviews I conducted with journalists themselves, and in the focus groups I held with my samples of media consumers in roughly the same generational cohort as most front-line journalists (university undergraduate students), the factors said to influence violence or restrictions placed against media workers fell into three broad but interlinked categories: deficiencies in the professional skills of young journalists; ‘corruption’; and the security prerogatives of different state structures in the various contexts. Time and again, my respondents would emphasise a lack of training for journalists which was said to contribute to the phenomenon of false news being spread or partiality or bias of journalists for or against certain powerful interests. The lack of training corresponded with deficiencies of what were conceived as professional ethics and the predominance of ‘corruption’ – exacerbated by the tiny profit margins of online news production – whereby positive news coverage would be sold to interested parties or practices of character-assassination blackmail would be used by unscrupulous media networks or individuals to generate revenue. Respondents frequently referred to these types of inaccurate reporting or highly partisan or even malign coverage as ‘mistakes’ which would generate conflict and put the journalists at risk – either from those affected individuals or groups or through arrest, detention or censorship from the state itself¹⁹.

While I return to the question of popular perceptions of truth claims or neutrality in the media below, it bears emphasising here the role of communications technology in drawing large numbers of individuals with widely varying skill-sets or qualifications into the journalistic profession - in a wider economic context where, by and large, youth unemployment is a perennial issue. The low technical barrier of entry to the profession is particularly relevant for online media. The potential anonymity of news production was emphasised by many of my respondents or interviewees (in comparison to the TV and Radio Broadcasters) as a potentially negative factor affecting the quality of material produced. When I asked interviewees about their view on the sheer number of news sites accessible and used by individuals in society, many emphasised concerns surrounding bias and unprofessionalism. Others, however, emphasised a more positive opinion about the effect of online media for popular literacy rates and engagement in political affairs. This observation leads us to the

¹⁸ National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ) Annual Report 2014 ‘Press Freedom at Risk in Somalia: Murder, Imprisonment, Censorship and Bad Laws’:

http://www.ifex.org/somalia/2015/01/13/somalia_annualreport_2014.pdf

¹⁹ This echoed the sentiment of the well-known British/Somali journalist Jamal Osman who published a piece in 2012 detailing the type of systemic journalistic ‘corruption’ which was, ultimately, making journalists targets of violence. This piece was widely circulated in Somali online media (including, interestingly, on pro-AS or *Jihadi* media networks) and details the practice of *sharuur* whereby journalists receive payments for stories, often simply lining up after press-conferences to receive cash from power-holders. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/oct/11/somali-journalists-dying-corruption-conflict>

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

next section which reflects on the role of news-media on wider processes of state-building and socio-political 'reconstruction' in the Somali territories.

3.3. Journalistic form and language: the 'cultural' politics of the Somali public sphere

News media - political commentary online and in newsprint - is one of the primary (or, in some cases, only) mediums by which most people in urban Somali contexts engage with the *written* Somali language in any substantial form. The apparent 'destruction' or 'degradation' of the Somali language is a process characteristically traced back to the fall of the Barre state (which had only formalised the script and carried out mass literacy programs from 1972 onwards) and is a great lament of contemporary intellectuals. The lack of state institutions in the post-1991 era to preserve, promote and innovate with the still young written form of the language, as well as the long absence of any state bureaucracies interfacing with the general population through the script, has produced a modern situation where Somali-language instruction is barely promoted in the basic educational system (Cassanelli & Abdikadir 2008, 107), and where foreign imports, mainly of Arabic and English, have made substantial inroads into the basic vocabularies of daily life for many people²⁰. The resulting linguistic mishmash or degradation of 'pure' Somali (a controversial question in itself when it comes to 'minority' dialects, as subsequent chapters will discuss) is frequently decried by local intellectuals who recall the nobility, pedigree and grace of oral poetic culture, and promote contemporary state efforts to preserve the language.

Commentators in the public sphere often critique the manner in which the state or international NGOs communicate with the wider society, for example the use of English in job advertisements or calls for tender. As competence in English is often a prerequisite for state or INGO employment, the writing of such advertisements in that language is often designed as a first step towards screening applicants. However, this strategy may rarely be particularly effective (many people, may be quite familiar with humanitarian, governmental or recruitment jargon without necessarily having a level of functional conversational English), and often breeds resentment or distrust from locals (as opposed to diaspora candidates) competing in the job market for positions within a state perceived as closeted, out of touch with daily cultural realities or norms, and riddled with 'returnee' nepotism. An editorial piece '*Af Soomaali iyo far qalaad*' ('The Somali tongue and foreign script') in the Xog Ogaal newspaper (March 2, 2015) points out that although the Somali language is lauded by politicians in public as being spoken all over the world, in Muqdisho it is hard

²⁰ However, certain factors (such as the classical religious orientation of Arabic-medium schools, or wider weaknesses in the wider educational system) largely prevent these existing school structures from producing large numbers of students who are actually competent in functional English or Modern Arabic. This observation is also based on my two years running an English language department for the University of Hargeysa. See also Heritage Institute Report (English/Somali) April 2015, '*Caqabadaha Waxbarasho ee Soomaaliya kaddib Kumeelgaarkii: Eegid Muqdisho*' <http://www.heritageinstitute.org/educational-challenges-in-post-transitional-somalia-case-study-mogadishu/>

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

to find a state office which actually uses it as an administrative language. The writer argues that many (language) teachers' salaries could be paid with what it costs to accommodate MPs in hotels every night. This touches on the perceived spatial divide between power holders and the population - encapsulated again in conceptions of the 'hotel' political elite. Considering that AS employs the rhetoric of populist religio-cultural contestation in both their propaganda and militancy, it should be clear that these linguistic divides between states/agencies and the populace can take on deadly significance.

By unpleasant coincidence I was personally witness to two separate AS attacks in the space of one week (during my fieldwork) against the Ministry of Higher Education in Muqdisho and against a United Nations bus carrying local and foreign educational experts in Garoowe. Both attacks took place immediately outside the hotels I was staying in and together resulted in the deaths of 17 people, including the attackers²¹. In both instances the AS communications explicitly referenced the targeting of educational facilitators allegedly spreading foreign and un-Islamic ideologies. Of course, the cultural politics of AS governance, insurgency and propaganda are hardly unambiguous in themselves. Their campaign must manage the inherent contradictions of its claims to legitimacy on the basis of both its place within a global *salafi-takfiri* ideological struggle *and* its distinct Somali nationalist flavour. This tension manifests itself linguistically, particularly in the communications of the group itself (or its supporters) which use Arabic, English and even Swahili. On one level AS communicates its 'Jihad' in Qu'ranic Arabic language and idiom - a mode of communication which large segments of the wider Somali population are increasingly conversant in as cultural orientation towards the Arabic and wider Islamic world intensifies. At the same time, the group's propagandists invoke a brand of Somali nationalism which decries foreign influence and employs a 'Somali' cultural repertoire of poetic references and emphasis on pastoral society and elements of clan-based customary law.

Such communicative patterns are explored at length in Chapter 5, arguing that these contradictions are employed productively to allow the group to project its appeal to *multiple audiences* both within and outside of Somalia. They are reflective, however, of wider tensions in Somali society around globalised cultural orientation and the disaffection or alienation of parts of the population from politics - which may take on a cultural-normative and linguistic aspect - can facilitate the discursive space for AS to attempt to legitimise its attacks on government or international organisations, particularly the UN. Suffice to say, the stakes of cultural-linguistic education are high in contemporary Somalia.

²¹ Shabelle News, Muqdisho, April 14, 2015 'Weerar lagu qaaday Wasaaradda Hidaha iyo Tacliinta Sare' [Attack launched against Ministry of Culture and Higher Education] <http://shabellenews.com/?p=3605> ; Lajiide Online, April 20, 2015 'Faah faahin: Qaraxii Shaqaalaha UN-ka ee Xafiiska Garowe iyo Al-Shabaab oo sheegatay' [Info: bombing of UN staff at Garoowe office, Al Shabaab claim responsibility] <http://www.lajiide.com/index.php/soomaali/98-faah-faahin-qaraxii-shaqaalaha-un-ka-ee-xafiiska-garowe-iy-al-shabaab-oo-sheegatay> (accessed April 29, 2015)

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

State authorities in Hargeysa, Garoowe and Muqdisho have taken steps towards the promotion of Somali both as a language of state and as part of their symbolic commitment to the promotion of ‘national’ culture and heritage. Government figures specifically address the decline of the Somali language, mandate the use of Somali in government documentation and establish or support cultural centres for the promotion of linguistic culture²². However, despite such recent and sporadic efforts there is no single functioning and effective ‘national’ body (which, of course, would be disputed by Somaliland) equivalent to an institution like the Barre-era Somali National Academy of Arts, Sciences and Literature to help standardise, re-promote and further develop the Somali language through *erey-bixin* (word creation for new terms). Considering the wider limitations and challenges around financing and state security faced by governments particularly in Muqdisho and Garoowe, it would appear that Hargeysa is currently best placed to for such initiatives to gain traction and yield significant results, albeit in the context of Somaliland-specific projects.

The Red Sea Cultural Centre in Hargeysa (*Xarunta Badda Cas*) is an example of an active, if private, institution working to promote Somali language and culture within Somaliland society. I was able to sit-in and participate in several classes at the Centre, attended by young local professionals eager to learn more about ‘their’ language, etymology and its dialects (covering all of the Somali territories). The teacher of the class, Cabdiraxmaan Faarax ‘Guri-barwaaqo’ had been abroad in the diaspora since the 1970s (Russia, Saudi Arabia, Canada) where he had founded a Somali language newspaper before returning in 2012 to what had become the Republic of Somaliland. Guri-Barwaaqo epitomises a type of returnee intellectual who has found better conditions for preserving and developing the Somali language in the diaspora, than within the Somali territories themselves. As these individuals move back to the Somali Horn they bring with them certain conceptions and objectives of cultural ‘revival’ often taking their points of reference from the pre state-collapse era. This is a theme I explore further in the subsequent Chapter on the relationship between diasporic and local media production and the case study of Amin Amir’s cartoons.

In his manner of speaking, in our conversations and during the classes he taught, I picked up on the particular way in which he employed the phrase ‘the south’ to refer to what, for his students’ generation, is that ‘other country’ of Somalia. For him ‘the south’ was defined in cultural-linguistic terms as being different to ‘the north.’ When discussing my selection of research sites, he noted how he conceived of Garoowe – geographically very clearly situated in northern Somalia – as being ‘southern’ in the sense that it, like Muqdisho and the other southern regions had less of a ‘written’

²² Horseed Media, February 21, 2015 ‘Wasiirka Warfaafinta Puntland oo ka hadlay sababaha Hoos u dhaca Afka Soomaaliga (Dhageyso)’ [The Information Minister of Puntland speaks about the decline of the Somali language] <http://horseedmedia.net/2015/02/21/wasiirka-warfaafinta-puntland-oo-ka-hadlay-sababaha-hoos-u-dhaca-afka-soomaaliga/> ; 1da Agoosto newspaper, Garoowe, February 28, 2015, ‘Wasaaradda warfaafinta Dowladda Puntland oo dhagax dhigtay xarunta Dhaqanka ee Puntland’ [Minister of Information lays foundation stone for Puntland Cultural Centre]; Xaqiiqa Times newspaper, Muqdisho, January 27, 2015, ‘Xafiisyada Dowladda oo Lagu Amray Adeegsiga Af Soomaaliga’ (‘Government Offices Ordered to use Somali’).

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

culture than the north (Somaliland), a fact for him epitomised by the more vibrant newspaper and print media scene in Hargeysa²³. While some scholars have viewed legacies of the British colonial education and administrative system as influencing post-colonial patterns of literacy in the north (Abdi 1998; Samatar 1989), the point here is that linguistic culture itself has become a subtly crafted political marker in the sense that the roles of cultural development or preservation have importance within modern presentations of legitimate 'Somali' sovereignties.

An example of this could be seen in the Hargeysa International Book Fair, an event now in its 10th year and run under the auspices of The Red Sea Centre. The book fair is ostensibly a showcase and promoter of written Somali cultural production. It also plays an important role in presenting to an interested international audience Hargeysa's (and Somaliland's) stability and its status a venue for cultural interaction. Here there exists an implicit assertion that the Somaliland Government is an independent entity playing a positive role in promoting Somali literature and cultural expression. Although the annual event is a civil society initiative, the boundary with state actors is often blurred. For instance, the current co-organiser of the Book Fair, Ayaan Maxamuud Cashuur, also serves as Somaliland's representative to the United Kingdom.

The role of 'internationalised' local intellectuals, external institutions, funders and participants is not entirely uncontroversial in the HIBF context, and serves as a window into contemporary debates in and on 'Somali' cultural production. In 2015, for example, great controversy was generated - particularly in the religious public sphere of Hargeysa's Mosques and through some of its more vocal Imams - when it was revealed that Jude Kelly, founder of *Women of the World* and known for her previous gay-rights advocacy, would be speaking on a panel at the event²⁴. Contestation here over external values and 'correct', 'Somali' and Islamic norms illustrated how modern debates on public morality are structured with regard to print cultural and cultural promotion, and are arguably indicative of wider divides between these internationalised elites (often 'returnees') and a more conservative local socio-religious culture which has developed in the post-1991 period.

In August 2015, Muqdisho hosted its first 'International Book Fair', a significant achievement given the security constraints on public events in the city and one which garnered significant local and international media attention. The holding of such an event shows a desire on the part of local and diaspora intellectuals to address similar concerns around the degradation of the Somali language and wider creative culture. Whilst it is not the case that the event was held simply to compete with Hargeysa's more established event, the political significance of the Fair should not be overlooked - branded, as it was, in a remarkably similar fashion, situated within the wider 'Mogadishu rising' narrative and the reassertion of the city as a cultural as well as political capital of Somalia. The

²³ Interview, Hargeysa University, May 5, 2015

²⁴ Cabdirisaaq Maxamed Axmed, Weedhsan.com, August 2015 (undated) '*HIBF: Dhaqan mise Dhaqan bi'in?*' [Hargeysa International Book Fair: Culture or the Smearing of It?] <http://www.weedhsan.com/index.php/galinleyda-weedhsan/7390-hibf-dhaqan-mise-dhaqan-bi-in-w-g-cabdirisaaq-maxamed-axmed>

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

significance of perceived control over this narrative became apparent in the controversy that accompanied international media coverage of the event. BBC Journalist Mary Harper's blog post about the event, whilst emphasising the event in the context of wider social or political reconstruction in Muqdisho²⁵, was accompanied by an image (apparently chosen by a sub-editor) of the aftermath of an unrelated AS attack. The picture was, no doubt, selected to illustrate the intense security challenges faced by organisers of an event such as this, but the reaction online was reminiscent of the '#Cadaanstudies' controversy discussed in Chapter 1, an element of which critiqued external presentations of Somalia and the control by outsiders of dominant narratives and discourses of modern Somali political history and development.

Whilst not overshadowing the events themselves, these two controversies generated around both the Hargeysa and Muqdisho 2015 book fairs are neatly instructive in their apparent symmetry. They highlight at once the political significance of 'Somali' cultural renaissance and guardianship associated with security and state building across Somalia, while at the same time constituting arenas for narrative contestation over external influences on (or portrayals of) cultural production and the public sphere²⁶.

Journalism itself is also seen to play a role linking written culture with processes of Somali political reconstruction (or reconfiguration). This is epitomised by externally funded efforts to raise professional capacity in the sector. Radio Ergo, a Somali-language humanitarian broadcaster funded by the UN and Western donors, has run training events for journalists in Muqdisho, Garoowe and Hargeysa which have focused both on basic literacy and writing skills (for the effective communication to audiences) as well as on journalistic ethics and correct conduct of media professionals. Once again, journalistic integrity and professionalism are linked to basic capabilities (e.g. in use of the written language). The normative societal function of journalists both within communities, as well as within the context of political reconstruction is implied by the types of training material used. Standardisation of spelling and the correct use of technical terminology is emphasised as a means by which to avoid misunderstandings and the generation of conflict²⁷. Furthermore, good journalistic conduct is associated with respectful or 'dignified' modes of address, for example – in a gendered context – the various appropriate terms of address for women (*marwo*/lady, as opposed to the less 'polite' *naag*/woman), or highlighted in advice for male

²⁵ Afrikada.net, August 28, 2015 '*Degdeg: Tifaftiraha BBC-da ee Afrika Mary Harper oo loo haysto war ay ka sheegtay Muqdisho*' [Breaking: BBC Africa editor Mary Harper taken to task for news reported from Muqdisho] <http://afrikada.net/2015/08/28/deg-deg-tifaftiraha-bbc-da-ee-afrika-mary-harper-oo-loo-haysto-war-ay-ka-sheegtay-muqdisho/> (accessed September 5, 2015)

²⁶ Not to be left behind, Puntland held its first book fair in Garoowe in July 2016.

²⁷ Correspondence with instructor Abdirizak Ismael Hashi who shared with me his teaching materials: in one presentation he points out to students (journalists) that '*Macallin baad tahay, si barenimadaadu u hagaagto waa inaad isticmaashid hikaad/higgaad/hingaad sax ah*' ('You are a teacher and in order to improve your teaching skills you must use correct spelling' – here highlighting three different versions of the actual word 'spelling' in common usage, ironically emphasising the difficulty of this very task). See also interview with training organiser Fowzia Omar (Nairobi, May 13, 2015).

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

journalists interviewing female victims of sexual violence - a highly charged political topic, as we shall see below.

Journalistic accountability is a frequent focus of these types of training and I recall here an instructive example of the way in which unaccountable and highly dubious quality reporting can serve to heighten tensions around already existing political flashpoints. Whilst the following example is indicative of a phenomenon hardly unique to the Somali territories, it does shed light on the ways in which disparate, fragmented and often fairly anonymous ‘news’ sources can influence and find their way into competing rhetorical narratives of political contestation, themselves drawing on dispersed and transnational sources of ideological legitimacy.

In January 2015 a story broke in the media across Somalia about the confiscation by Somaliland authorities of alleged military hardware and vehicles discovered on board a Sudanese-registered ship which had docked at Berbera port. Certain online media networks, notably *Caasimadda.com* (based in Muqdisho) subsequently posted pictures which it stated were taken during the Somaliland authorities’ public display of this equipment. Whilst some of the images of armoured personnel carriers looked, at a cursory glance, like they could conceivably have been taken at Berbera port, others, including pictures of tanks bearing World War Two-era *Wehrmacht* insignia, appeared to me, somewhat out of place. Through some fairly basic internet military-history research I was able to track down and identify the website from which the image had been copied: a site advertising a private collection of replica WWII tanks usually displayed at English county fairs, and somewhat unlikely to have gone on out-of-season secondment to the Horn of Africa²⁸.

Whilst Somali online media often uses ‘stock’ images to illustrate news stories, in this instance the headline was stating that these pictures were taken at the scene in Berbera and so represented a different category of journalistic malpractice. With the ease of replication of the online media form these image began appearing on numerous other sites. This, in turn, even prompted some breathless commentators to remark on the ‘Nazi’ origins of the weaponry Somaliland was importing - as opposed to questioning the authenticity of the originally disseminated images themselves²⁹.

Given the continued enforcement and monitoring of the UN arms embargo against Somalia, allegations and misinformation of this kind is a serious business, and the rhetoric coming from Puntland over this incident also illustrated the stakes potentially involved in such a controversy: the Puntland administration frequently alleges a covert role of Somaliland in supporting AS’s operations,

²⁸ Caasimada Online, February 1, 2015 ‘*Arag sawiro laga soo qaaday taankiyo & gawaari casri ah oo saaran markabkii lagu qabtay dekedda Berbera dhowaan.*’ [See pictures taken of tanks and modern vehicles from ship held in berbera port recently] <http://caasimadda.com/arag-sawiro-laga-soo-qaaday-qaar-kamid-ah-gaadiidkii-dagaal-ee-ku-rarnaa-markabka-berbera-kusoo-xirtay/> ; See also one John Webster’s replica tanks website for the source of the copied pictures <http://www.milweb.net/webverts/59550/>

²⁹ Horseed Media, February 2, 2015 ‘*Somaliland oo hubkii Saarnaa Markabkii Berbera ku xirnaa la soo degtey!*’ [Somaliland offloads weapons from ship impounded in Berbera] <https://horseedmedia.net/2015/02/02/somaliland-oo-hubkii-ka-dejisay-markabkii-hubka-sidey-ee-ku-xirtay-berbera/>

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

and statements by the Puntland Security Minister around this arms seizure (as reported in the Muqdisho media) highlighted the administration's fears that this materiel would end up in the hands of those militants³⁰. This prompted a response from Somaliland's defence minister lambasting the Puntland claims, and, after discussions with the Sudanese government the ship was eventually released with the alleged military cargo reloaded. What this hardware actually consisted of, and its intended final destination, remained unclear in the flurry of dubious reporting and use of fake images by journalists and propagandists eager to make a political point³¹.

There is, of course, often a sizeable distinction to be made between the rhetoric of such political actors and the actual incidence of conflict on the ground. Somaliland and Puntland *do* engage in sporadic skirmishes, although this particular incident (shouted out, as it were, from the distance of the various political centres) did not lead to a serious escalation in tension in the disputed areas of Sool and Sanaag, perhaps highlighting the primacy of local factors in this particular contexts (Hoehne 2015). It is, nonetheless, instructive for the manner in which political claims and counter-claims are made through media channels in these different capitals. The combination of ubiquitous instantaneous and transnational online media, with increased discursive and physical political distance between power centres in Somalia creates a public sphere environment in which masses of information (or misinformation) can be selectively deployed and utilised by various, often anonymous actors. The widening disjuncture of political-territorial identity and the potential fertility of conspiracy theories in this public sphere context are combined processes which I reflect on in the conclusion and, with more discursive or rhetorical focus, in Chapter six, in regards to narratives of clan-political agencies.

Many journalists in the Somali territories themselves lament such examples of malpractice, and in interviews with media professionals a desire was commonly articulated for the development of 'quality' journalism that could inform and educate the population whilst holding officials to account in an unbiased fashion. The launch of the *Xaqiiqa Times* newspaper in Muqdisho (in print and downloadable) represented an initiative in that direction. Founded in 2014 by the internationally experienced journalist Yuusuf Xasan, the fortnightly paper attempts to demonstrate the higher production values and 'investigative' function of local media, self-consciously distinguishing itself from other local daily papers³². Structured and relatively probing interviews with Government officials are a novel feature of the Muqdisho media scene and represent a desire to present a more informed critique of power-holders, alongside more traditional comment and opinion pieces³³.

³⁰ Xog-doon newspaper, Muqdisho, January 31, 2014, '*Puntland oo ku eedeysay Somaliland inay taageerto xoogaga Al-Shabaab ee Galgala*', [Puntland accuses Somaliland of supporting Al Shabaab in Galgala.]

³¹ After email correspondence (21 January 2017) with the United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea I have ascertained that MV Shaker was carrying military cargo loaded in Sudan and was en route to an Abu Dhabi arms fair. See UNMGSE report on Eritrea 20 October 2015 (S/2015/802) pp.15-17.

³² Interview Yuusuf Xasan, Editor of *Xaqiiqa Times*, Muqdisho

³³ *Xaqiiqa Times* newspaper, Muqdisho, April 10, 2014, '*Hanti-dhowrka Qaranka: Dib Baa Loo Eegayaa Heshiisyadii La Galay*' [The Auditor General: looking again at the contracts signed]

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

The difficulties that this approach will face in the tense and opaque political context of Muqdisho may well become apparent and the sustainability of the venture is by no means assured. Nonetheless, it is clear that media entrepreneurs such as Xasan see increasing stabilisation as providing new openings in the newspaper market as well as new conceptions of the role that journalism is imagined to play in the process of political reconstruction itself. The fact that the paper was being distributed free on local flights coming in and out of Muqdisho was indicative of the ‘national’ ambitions of the paper in a changing commercial media market in the capital and it was illuminating to see the interest with which passengers picked up and read the colour-printed newspaper, a novel production in the local media context.

3.4. Consumers: spaces of the Somali public sphere

The ‘Telesom’ junction in downtown Hargeysa lies at the heart of a dynamic and fast-changing urban environment. Officially the intersection of Road Number 1 and Ahmed Takhtuur Road (the signposting of street names has been a very recent and noticeable initiative of the local authorities) the crossroads is usually known by its most prominent architectural inhabitant – the squat green cube of the Telesom building, the Republic of Somaliland’s predominant mobile phone service provider. The building is a customer service hub and throughout the mornings and late afternoons it is full of people there to manage their money and mobile accounts.

Surrounding the building, and catering to this stream of customers and passersby, are the newspaper vendors. These boys and young men, who have collected their armfuls of the numerous different newspaper titles earlier in the morning from distribution points elsewhere in the downtown market, weave through the bustle selling their wares to passing customers coming from the adjacent central covered *suuq* or those seated in the large Cadaani cafe across the road at the junction. Whilst this trade in news is a common sight all over downtown Hargeysa – these vendors hawk their papers through most of the cafes, teashops, *qaat* shacks (*mafrish*), and more upmarket restaurants – it is at the Telesom junction where the convergence of the different strands of the Hargeysa public sphere can most clearly be seen coming together: mobile telecommunications, market commerce, print media and cafe culture all rolled into one.

The most prominent public sites for media consumption in Hargeysa (and indeed Garoowe and Muqdisho) are largely male dominated. Restaurants and cafes may have smaller segregated women’s areas, but the dynamics I discuss here with regard to the comparative conditions of public sphere association are primarily conceived in male terms. Cafe culture in Hargeysa is flourishing, and exists partly as a function of the booming local economy, itself driven by urban stability, light-touch government regulation or taxation, diaspora remittances and investment in human and material capital, and ever-expanding service, telecommunications and construction industries. In Hargeysa (as in Muqdisho and Garoowe) cafe culture remains the primary node around which most people socialise in public: alternative settings, such as cinemas or performance of live music or drama are largely

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

absent in public environments where considerations around proper Islamic conduct are becoming more and more important and informally policed. One debate that I witnessed during my time working for the University of Hargeysa centred around the inclusion of ‘traditional’ dance (involving men and women) in the institution’s yearly ‘Cultural Week’ events. A sizeable conservative faction of the student body largely succeeded in limiting the space for musical or dance-related performance within the context of legitimate ‘Somali’ cultural performance. Poetry, however, is usually seen as being acceptable and is increasingly emphasised as the exemplar of ‘Somali’ ethno-cultural production.

It is telling that cultural or artistic production is far more prevalent through television and online media channels than it is in any public setting in modern Somalia or Somaliland. This is particularly true for ‘traditional’ music and dance with programming often nostalgic in tone and featuring pre state-collapse footage. This is due partly to security concerns (especially in Muqdisho where the National Theatre has been a past target of Islamist militants) as well as the fact that many of these centres of production are located in the diaspora. It should be noted, however that, diaspora communities themselves are certainly not unaffected by conservative cultural religious trends and subsequent chapters return to this complex question of trans-nationalism and ‘Somali’ cultural orientation³⁴. The prevalence of artistic material in amongst news media indicates that a market exists for such products which seem to be consumed vicariously and do not have many well-publicised or prominent outlets for live performance in Somalia/Somaliland itself.

Socio-economic stratification – ever more visible in the heady atmosphere of urban economic expansion – is reflected across various sites of the public sphere. As commercial development expands from the city’s core into peripheral neighbourhoods, many of the old standbys of the lower-class public sphere - the roadside plywood shacks of the *qaat* stalls, the *mafrish* where men buy the narcotic leaves, chew, smoke, drink soda, converse and listen to the radio – are displaced by new real estate. In some cases these new developments include new, more concrete (as it were) meeting spaces; modern cafes, restaurants or barber shops.

Elsewhere, the established restaurants and hotels spread across the city still provide a draw for broad clienteles, whilst the big, self-defined ‘international hotels’, like the Maansoor or Ambassador, maintain more rigorous security screening, house expatriate staff and serve as hubs for local and external elites. The bigger hotels invariably include facilities for meetings and different types of public and private events, and often the buzz of their cafes corresponds to the schedules of the various ceremonies, seminars or ‘workshops’ taking place. Mid-mornings are always the busiest time at a

³⁴ BBC Somali, February 8, 2015, ‘*Hiba Maxamed oo joojisay muusigga*’ [Hiba Maxamed quits music], http://www.bbc.com/somali/maqal_iyo_muuqaal/2015/02/150208_hiba_maxamed_hiba_nuura. The story explains how famous diaspora based singer, Hiba Maxamed, has publically renounced her music and its performance on the basis of guidance from religious scholars. Maxamed, whose career had spanned 50 years explains to the interviewer how she remains willing to perform ‘literature’ for the benefit of the nation and of Islam, but not anything put to music.

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

place like the Imperial Hotel, a kind of ‘mid-tier’ establishment with a broad clientele, and located in the heart of the Government Ministries’ district. At this point in the day, the civil society or ‘stakeholder’ great and good spills out of various ‘capacity-building’ or ‘empowerment’ workshops (almost invariably financed by foreign donor money), the women usually disappearing to their own more secluded zones, whilst the men take their seats around the garden. Ordering sweet tea and cappuccinos from the perpetually harried waiters they sip their beverages in shade, waiting for the newspaper and shoe-shine boys to come around.

After 11am though, the espresso machines are switched off in preparation for the *Duhur* call to midday prayer and quiet (punctuated perhaps by some post-Mosque diners in for lunch) reigns until after *Casar*, the mid-afternoon prayer rousing people from their slumber through the midday heat. As businesses start to reopen after 4pm, the cafes of the city start to fill up again. The early evening radio news from the BBC Somali Service or the VOA is often listened to amongst the din of the reawakened streets, a ritual that persists even if it is considered by many smart-phone savvy youngsters to be very much an anachronism: something of their parents’ generation when instant access to radio, print or visual journalism wasn’t but a click away on a 3 or even 4G connection.

The increasing individualisation of media consumption accompanies new technological innovation. It is often notable in different social contexts how people are increasingly plugged into media through their mobiles and headphones, often sharing space with their fellows but consuming very different products, whether websites, local FM radio stations (particularly in Muqdisho where the market is so diverse), or *Youtube* videos³⁵. Gone are the days when a much smaller range of authoritative news sources were relied upon by the majority of a national audience. Many of these old standbys such as the BBC are increasingly interacted with online by audiences where they are challenged or critiqued by consumers sensitive to perceived political or regional biases. Such consumers are also often attuned to the fact that such media is broadcast into Somalia from abroad, and online commentary or debate in the local press indicates popular concern that ‘correct’ normative boundaries of media agency are followed.

I discussed at length the perceived neutrality of external Somali language media sources (particularly the BBC or VOA) with my university focus group participants in Hargeysa, Garoowe and Muqdisho. In each location arguments were made about a lack of neutrality - whether an over-emphasis on negative stories, disproportionate number of people from certain groups in powerful positions in these media organisations, a lack of representation of journalists on the ground in certain places, or perceptions of foreign or western influence or propaganda. However, the fact that these critiques came from consumers from different locations and political orientations is an indication that a certain regional-political objectivity is at least strived for by networks like the BBC or VOA. Producers at such international Somali broadcasters are clearly aware that the perception of bias

³⁵ I am grateful to Faduma Abukar Mursal for pointing out this phenomenon to me in Muqdisho.

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

towards or against any region in a politically fragmented Somalia will have serious consequences for their station's popularity and credibility. Many students also emphasised their respect for the technical journalistic capacity and professionalism of the staff of these organisations, indicative of their continued importance in the media environment despite a diversification of alternate news sources and means of access.

If content in the public sphere is highly internationalised then so too are many of the *spaces* of the public sphere in these political centres. Here I refer to the presence of many diaspora returnees (as businessmen, politicians, or 'consultants' in humanitarian or governance sectors) or transient elites who move back and forth between continents, sometimes alone, sometimes bringing their families to experience life back in the Somali Horn. The Hargeysa social scene of restaurants, hotels and cafes, for example, is particularly busy in the (European) summer season when diaspora children are on vacation from their schools and are brought by their parents to the Horn. Labels of *dhaqan celis* (for those experiencing 'cultural rehabilitation or return') are prominent here and this diverse phenomenon ranges from family holidays where diaspora children are brought 'back' to see the motherland and their extended family, to practices of sending wayward youths to Somalia from Europe or North America to be essentially detained by family members, mental health clinics (Tiilikainen 2011) or even (as I have observed) within the formal prison system. Accounts such as Hansen's (2007) and Hammond's (2015) capture both the complex and non-linear movements of 'revolving returnees', as well as the controversy and contestation which is often generated by such mobility, particularly around cultural norms and competition generated in the local job market.

The internationalised nature of urban public sphere settings is highlighted not only through the consumption of externally-produced media (Somali or non-Somali), but also in the content of so-called 'local' news. Newspapers in Hargeysa usually have an international section composed of stories of relevance to diaspora communities (or locals who may have family members abroad). Taken from foreign media and translated or commented on, this content frequently explores developments or controversies in Europe. For example, stories could cover 'anti-radicalisation' policies in education rolled out by the British government, or there may be comment on inflammatory statements made in the European media about 'swarms' of migrants at the continent's borders³⁶. Where the focus is not Europe or North America a common theme is human-interest or religious-related stories from the wider Islamic world, particularly the Gulf states where many Somalis reside and which are often presented as potential exemplars of successful Muslim economic development and state-building. Such media themes are indicative of an internationalised 'Somali' audience, on the ground in the Horn of Africa and these public sphere spaces serve as forums in which transnational socio-cultural identities of a global Somali population are reproduced.

³⁶ *Himilo* newspaper, Hargeysa April 25, 2015, '*Qaxootiga Yurub oo lagu sifeeyey cayayaan liita*' [Refugees described as bad as insects in Europe.]

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

Many of the features of public sphere space outlined above are characteristic in the differing political contexts of Garoowe and Muqdisho, and yet there are also significant differences. Garoowe lacks the type of boom-town economic atmosphere that can be felt in Hargeysa, and even parts of Muqdisho in the post-2012 SFG period. Cafe, hotel and restaurant-culture exist in the Puntland capital yet the newspaper market is considerably smaller. More private FM radio stations are available in Garoowe than Hargeysa – given the Puntland government’s somewhat less firm regulatory role – although neither place compares with regard to Muqdisho’s fragmented and crowded radio broadcasting marketplace.

The conditions for public sphere media consumption in Muqdisho are set in no small part by the fluctuating security situation. During my time in Muqdisho people would often remark that the number of people out on the streets of the capital - congregating to drink tea, listen to the radio and read newspapers around hotels, big businesses, universities and government Ministries - was a clear barometer of the popularly perceived level of threat of violence. Whilst major AS attacks in central Muqdisho continue to occur on a sporadic basis, the general trend of increasing numbers of people coming out on the streets to do business and socialise (even at night) has been maintained. Arguably, AS has become slightly more sensitive to the negative publicity generated by attacks which are perceived to be indiscriminate with regard to civilian locations (here read non-government) and the group’s communications often contain warnings to civilians to disassociate themselves from any location connected to the state.

The re-emergence of ‘ordinary’ or ‘everyday’ day urban life is a key component of the ‘Muqdisho rising’ narrative. Part of this, of course, concerns the ability of people to come together in public sphere locations and thus the status of such sites is highly political in nature. AS’s asymmetrical mode of urban warfare has made social destabilization and a derailing of this narrative a key priority, whilst the targeting of restaurants or cafes being opened with diaspora finance or by diaspora returnees had been justified both on the grounds that these locations were haunts of members of the ‘apostate’ government *and* the accusation that such places were hotbeds of vice and inappropriate or culturally unacceptable behaviour³⁷.

As the targeting has shifted in the last year or so towards bigger and more fortified targets such as hotels and ministries the discourse of AS legitimisation tries to take advantage of the social and cultural difference that is perceived to exist between elites and the wider population. The infrastructure of securitisation of these nodes of the elite public sphere are obvious all around Muqdisho and Cabdishakuur Mire’s piece quoted above on the newspaper boy is telling in its portrayal of social barriers and intense mistrust within a public sphere that, nevertheless, manages to

³⁷ See pro-Jihadi website commentary by Bashiir Mohamed, October 24, 2014 ‘*Qurba Joogta iyo Qaran Joogta Maxaa Kala Heysta!*’ [What have diaspora people got to do with those who stayed in the nation] as an example of a morality piece referencing ‘culturally’ inappropriate behaviour in such locations dominated by the diaspora. <http://voiceofsomalia.net/2013/10/24/magaal-qurba-joogta-iyo-qaran-joogta-maxaa-kala-heysta-gore-bashiir-mohamed/>

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

continue operating in the context of wider economic development and reconstruction of the capital. This relationship between public sphere media production and the politics of counter-insurgency and state-building is elaborated on in the following section.

3.5. Information control, insurgency and state-building

Across the three political centres, control over media narratives within the different environments of the public spheres is of paramount importance for state authorities and challengers to power, all of whom are engaged at some level in contestation for - or reconfiguration and reconstruction of - new mechanisms of legitimate governance. Muqdisho represents the most volatile of these contexts, where violent contestation (and its mediated portrayal) is most common and acute. In representing a fairly decisive departure from previous transitional governance structures - but in the absence of popular elections - the SFG has been required to pay close attention to its propagation of legitimate authority and has attempted to gain control over a narrative of securitisation, re-establishment of governance structures and the fight against terrorism.

‘State’ media, notably Somali National Television and Radio Muqdisho, plays a role here, broadcasting documentaries such as *‘Barnaamij ku saabsan shabakado Al Shabaab ah oo la soo qabtay’* (‘Program about apprehended Al Shabaab Networks’) which presents the conspiratorial nature of AS militancy amongst and within Muqdisho communities³⁸. The film features dramatic shots of elite SFG forces in full battle-gear, engaging the enemy over a Hollywood Action Movie-esque soundtrack. The ‘patriotism’ of the SFG forces is emphasised along with the warning to the population that the state will seize property rented to AS, a practice justified with reference to Islamic law from Sheekh Bashiir Axmed Salaad (the Head of the Organisation of Somali Clerics). The film continues with detailed interviews from captured AS operatives who have been involved in different capacities in the planning or execution of assassination operations in the city.

This television production serves as an example of the state’s communication in a context where the armed opposition has the capacity to broadcast widely online and, arguably, produces material of a higher level of technical polish and slickness. Although detailed analysis of AS and pro-*Jihadi* media is provided in Chapter 5, of note here is the fact that the SFG is in direct competition with the militants in terms of propagating their material in the public sphere. Also of relevance is the way in which ‘mainstream’ Somali private media respond to the release of AS propaganda films. Often news producers (who may not directly identify with AS’s *Jihadi-Takfiiri* ideology) can be seen to give coverage or reproduction to such high-profile media products, in that they are deemed newsworthy in themselves (and will thus generate internet traffic and hits)³⁹.

³⁸ SNTV documentary, December 7, 2014 *‘Barnaamij ku saabsan Shabakado Al-Shabaab ah oo la soo qabtay’* [Program about apprehended Al Shabaab networks] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEaiTnXcuXM>

³⁹ *Caasimadda Online*, July 1, 2015, *‘Daawo sawirada Al Shabaab oo soo bandhigay meydadka askarii Burundi ee lagu dilay Leego’* [See pictures that Al Shabaab has published of bodies of Burundian soldiers killed in Leego]

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

The SFG frequently broadcasts footage of its battlefield or intelligence successes, including images or interviews with captured operatives and judicial processes (up to and including executions) of either alleged AS members or government forces themselves accused of killing civilians. The relationship between the media and state counter-insurgency in Muqdisho has been discussed by renowned journalist and former head of the BBC Somali Service, Yusuuf Garaad, who has criticised the amateurish nature of such joint productions⁴⁰. Garaad has pointed out the negative effects on intelligence gathering and potential criminal prosecutions of allowing (even encouraging) journalists to interview suspects of attacks shortly after their capture. On this dynamic media battlefield it appears that the state is torn between attempting to present its forces' successes whilst actually prosecuting an effective and credible counter-intelligence operation against a foe which has infiltrated all levels of society and, indeed, state and security forces themselves.

Regulating flows of information in this conflict-setting can often have direct significance for protagonists or those caught up in moments of violence themselves: in another comment piece Garaad lambasts rolling media coverage of ongoing attacks of the kind described earlier in this chapter (including the use of *Twitter* by eager journalists) as a factor potentially putting more lives at risk during such incidents and being capitalised on by attackers themselves who can use such updates to predict security forces' responses⁴¹. The 21st Century technological context of the Muqdisho public sphere is highly dynamic and coverage itself has the potential to alter events as they unfold, a fact not lost on actors (such as AS militants and spokesmen) who prepare for operations with carefully planned strategies for media exposure.

Occasionally the state attempts to take direct charge of the narrative politics of the ongoing conflict it is engaged in. In May 2015, the Head of the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) made a public 'request' to the media in Muqdisho to stop using the term 'Al Shabaab' to refer to AS and instead use the acronym 'UGUS' (*Ururka Gumaadka Ummadda Soomaaliyeed* – 'Organisation of the Destruction of the Somali Ummah')⁴². This somewhat clumsy directive illustrated the importance placed by the state on the media narratives as well as the limitations of its

<http://caasimadda.com/daawo-sawirada-alshabaab-oo-soo-bandhigay-meydadka-askarii-burundi-ee-lagu-dilay-leego/>

⁴⁰ Yuusuf Garaad's blogpost was reproduced on pro-Jihadi website *Voice of Somalia*, presumably to highlight the connections between journalists and the intelligence services. This serves as an example of the use of material from a very different ideological standpoint for alternative rhetorical ends) July 15, 2014 '*Saxaafadda iyo Sirdoonka*' [Journalists and the Intelligence Agencies] <http://voiceofsomalia.net/2014/07/15/saxaafadda-iyo-sirdoonkaqore-yusuf-garaad/>

⁴¹ Yuusuf Garaad, *Xaqiiqa Times* newspaper, Muqdisho April 10, 2015, '*Warfaafin mise sirfaafin?*' [News broadcasting or secrets broadcasting?]

⁴² Radio Kulmiye, Muqdisho, May 3, 2015 '*Warbaahinta Muqdisho oo laga dalbaday in ay Joojiyaan Isticmaalka Magaca Al-shabaab*' [Muqdisho Media requested to stop using the name 'Al Shabaab'] <http://radiokulmiye.com/knn/warbaahinta-muqdisho-oo-laga-dalbaday-in-ay-joojiyaan-isticmaalka-magaca-al-shabaab/> (accessed June 5, 2015). Unsurprisingly, AS responded to this by coming up with their own 'UGUS' acronym for the SFG '*Ururka Gumeeya Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*' [Organisation for the humiliation of the Somali Ummah].

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

sporadic control of the industry. The irony of its announcement on 'World Press Freedom Day' notwithstanding, its ambiguity was troubling for many in the local media (a request or an order!? many wondered) given the SFG's past form with regard to prosecutions of journalists.

Since the establishment of the SFG there have been several high profile arrests, detentions, prosecutions and convictions of journalists in Muqdisho, ostensibly for reporting (or allegedly falsely reporting) information that has 'incited' popular discontent directed against the state. These have included the prosecution of journalists for reporting rape allegations regarding Government forces, or against media networks such as Shabelle Radio, targeted for broadcasting AS statements, or *vox-populi*-esque programming of uncensored public opinions which, the Government has claimed, is tantamount to incitement of clan violence in the city. The Shabelle incident occurred during a flurry of disarmament operations by the SFG against long-influential neighbourhood militia leaders (such as Axmed Daaci in Wadajir district), a process which led to armed confrontations and significant tension in parts of the city. In this situation media coverage was deemed by the SFG to have been socially destabilising. However, popular perceptions abounded in Muqdisho that Shabelle radio was receiving a high level of state scrutiny partly due to a particular dynamic of clan ownership and intra-Hawiye contestation going on in Government in Muqdisho⁴³.

In another notable recent example of an attack on press freedom, Universal TV East Africa director Cabdilaahi Xirsi Kulmiye and journalist Cawil Daahir Salaad were arrested and held for 6 days by NISA after the broadcasting of a *Doodwadaag* debate featuring two members of Parliament, one of whom made provocative statements about Somalia's current status under the 'colonial/imperial' control of neighbouring powers. Both the debate and the subsequent arrests were picked up by pro-*Jihadi* media, spun to verify their frequent claims of external dominion over Somalis⁴⁴. The SFG's limited communications around the detentions referred to the broadcasting of sensitive information pertaining to state security however the journalists were eventually released after an apparent intervention from the Leader of Parliament⁴⁵. The importance of narratives of

⁴³ Interview with family member of Shabelle Media Owner Cabdimalik Yuusuf Maxamuud, Muqdisho, April 11, 2014. The narrative here regarded Abgal (The President's Hawiye sub-clan) distrust of the intentions of Cayr (Habir Gedir/Hawiye) figures such as Cabdimalik, and his alleged role in stirring up trouble amongst the Abgal, as well as the perception that Shabelle Media's owners have close links with foreign diplomats and intelligence services. The issue of Cabdimalik's prosecution was reportedly raised by Cayr elders during negotiations that were ongoing surrounding the creation of the Central Regions Federal State, adding to the President's suspicions that intra-Hawiye politics in Muqdisho were linked with the wider Federalisation process and external actors who he believed were attempting to orchestrate his removal before 2016. Whilst the neutrality of this informant could be questioned, the narrative is characteristic of many interpretations of intra-Hawiye political manoeuvring and (allegedly) engineered destabilisation in Muqdisho, explicitly linked to Federal reconfiguration and external interests.

⁴⁴ Somalimemo online, October 2015, '*Dood Wadaag:Xildhibaan Xaqiijiyay in Somalia Gumeysi ku Jirto*' [Debate: MPs confirm that Somalia is under colonial rule]

<http://somalimemo.net/play.php?action=video&id=20&do=video>

⁴⁵ Raadreeb online, October 7, 2015, '*Wariyayaashii ku xirnaa Muqdisho oo la sii daayey*' [Journalists held in Muqdisho released] <http://www.raadreeb.com/2015/10/07/wariyayaashii-ku-xirnaa-muqdisho-oo-lasii-daayay/> (accessed 30 October, 2015)

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

external interference and ‘neo-colonialism’ for wider discourses of ethno-nationalism are discussed at length in subsequent chapters, and the incident described here illustrates their potential sensitivity vis-à-vis the state and within the technical context of information dissemination and regulation. Legal frameworks regulating journalistic conduct remain ambiguous despite the ratification in January 2016 of the Somali Media Law. This vaguely worded document includes provisions that media content be ‘based on respect for Islamic law and Somali culture’ and that journalists should ‘avoid the dissemination or publication of videos and photos that are against the sound conduct of the society’⁴⁶. The definition of such terms (or the identity of arbitrating bodies) is left unelaborated, giving the state significant leeway to prosecute individuals where it sees fit.

Although the security contexts of media in Garoowe or Hargeysa are somewhat less fraught than Muqdisho, regulation of media is a sporadically-used mechanism for the flexing of the muscles of state power (such as it is) in these environments. The young people with whom I discussed these issues in both Garoowe and Hargeysa were keen to emphasise the legal frameworks in operation to govern relations between private news media and the state. They made frequent reference to the concept of an appropriate balance between rights and responsibilities of journalists and offered different perceptions of how ‘free’ media was in these administrations. In general they would argue that Puntland or Somaliland was a freer and safer environment for journalists than elsewhere in Somalia or the Horn, although some in Garoowe did note the greater risk of AS retaliation against journalists in some parts of Puntland, notably the town of Gaalkacyo⁴⁷. Puntland’s media law was ratified by its Parliament in mid 2014 after heated negotiations with the Media Association of Puntland, an independent journalists’ union covering the territory. Compromise was eventually reached although some journalists continued to feel that the legislation gave too many powers to the state authorities, including the issuance by the Information Ministry of mandatory identity cards for journalists.

The Puntland authorities have on several occasions suspended the operations of various external radio and television broadcasters (such as VOA, or Somali National TV from Muqdisho) usually under the pretext that they have disseminated false information, particularly in regard to internal Puntland politics or reporting of Puntland’s relationship with Muqdisho and negotiations over the federalisation process⁴⁸. The Puntland administration’s close links with Golis telecommunications (the primary mobile phone and internet service provider for the territory) has also allowed for the temporary blocking of certain local websites such as Puntland Today and Puntland Now.

⁴⁶ Somalia Media Law, Article 25.2. See also Human Rights Watch (2016) “Like fish in poisonous waters” <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/05/02/fish-poisonous-waters/attacks-media-freedom-somalia>

⁴⁷ Four focus groups held at Puntland State University between March 7-8, 2015, Garoowe. Three focus groups held at Gollis University between May 7-10, 2015, Hargeysa.

⁴⁸ VOA Somali, May 19, 2015, ‘Puntland oo dib u Fasaxday TV-ga Dawladda Somalia’ [Puntland gives permission again for Somali Government TV to operate]: <http://www.voasomali.com/content/article/2777271.html>

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

As in Garoowe, a diverse and privatised media market in Hargeysa operates within wider structures of social, legal and political contestation, negotiation and mediation. For this reason the concept of press ‘freedom’ is of limited analytical use for this account which has focused more on how information-flows and public expression are perceived by media consumers themselves. Although press freedom is popularly cited as an element of Somaliland’s democratic stability (itself a highly political narrative as the territory defines itself in contrast to the rest of ‘Somalia’), considerations of social stability and the legitimacy of state power are also important for people in defining appropriate boundaries of media expression. For example, the Chairman of the Somaliland Journalists’ Association (SOLJA) himself explained how he agreed with the State’s restriction of private FM radio, for the reason that an expansion of specific clan-affiliated networks would promote social fragmentation.

Also emphasised in our discussions was the perception that journalists operated within clan networks (overlapping and interacting with the formal legal system) that would advocate for them, represent them in disputes, and serve as mechanisms of protection. This was contrasted with how he saw the situation in the south (Somalia) whereby higher clan fragmentation produced the circumstances in which journalists were at much greater risk of violence⁴⁹. This narrative does not preclude, however, the state’s prosecution of journalists, usually under the legally defined charge of reporting false information, and several media professionals have been convicted for the publishing of derogatory stories about figures close to the highest levels of governmental power⁵⁰. Once again, the state has some capacity to sporadically regulate media production through legal frameworks and its security services, justified in terms of societal stability.

3.6. Conclusion: The dual Somali public sphere

This chapter has comparatively outlined multiple points of overlap between public sphere media production/consumption and expressions of statehood across Somali political contexts. Stremlau, Fantini and Osman critique overly normative conceptualisations of media agency in conflict environments such as Somalia (2015). They argue that the political economy of Somali media is defined by internal commercial logics of political patronage, combined with a profusion of young journalists with few alternative employment opportunities. While such conclusions are corroborated

⁴⁹ Interview, Hargeysa, May 3, 2015. Arguments were made to me by various other informants in Hargeysa concerning the perceived clannic-social stability (or ‘fixity’ of the clan system in the north) in contrast to greater fluidity in the south and greater diversity at the clan-family level. Such arguments would follow the logic that in a social structure regulated by hierarchies of elders of clans who all ‘know’ each other, and can relate to the state in this manner, there is little room for networks such as that created by AS to operate. Idealised as this conception is (given the likely underground presence of AS in Somaliland) this idea remains pervasive, including for interpretations of how journalists operate and interact with society.

⁵⁰ The owner and editor of the Haatuf newspaper were given jail terms in 2014 for defamatory stories published about the President’s son in law. They were pardoned shortly after their conviction however the newspaper remains inactive (the website still operates).

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

by my own fieldwork, my focus extends both to media content and the wider reception and influence of media production across a fragmented political environment. Materialist accounts such as Stremlau, Fantini and Osman's rightly problematise notions of 'corruption' in the Somali media market context and interrogate naive assumptions that media agency is necessarily objective and constitutive of a positive pillar of critical civil society. It is nonetheless important, however, not to overlook the genuine debates which are ongoing in (and *on*) the Somali public sphere which have a bearing on the 'cultural' or ethno-religious identity of emerging and competing political authorities.

This comparative analysis of news media production and consumption across the political centres of southern Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland has illustrated how this information environment both reflects and influences political fragmentation and reconfiguration across these territories. The technological and political contexts of media production and consumption breed a profusion of different narrative voices and possibilities for more individualised and diversified consumption. These voices, nonetheless, all attempt to legitimise themselves through discourses of authentic 'Somali' identity and sovereignty in a highly politicised socio-cultural arena of contestation. The contours of Somali ethno-religious nationalist political imagination, still vital in the context of the reconstruction of a shattered state and society, are shaped by these technological and political conditions, and the status of media production (down to the form of the Somali language itself) is understood by protagonists to be fundamental in defining the parameters political reconfiguration and new Somali sovereignties. The politics of 'book fairs', discussed above, is one succinct example of this dynamic, where popular desires for cultural regeneration overlap with the narratives and agendas of different Somali state-makers. Competing ethno-nationalist discourses of *Soomaalinimo* are interrogated in greater depth in textual analyses in subsequent chapters.

Emphasised in this chapter is the duality of the public sphere in the Somali context. There coexist multiple arenas of information production, consumption and reproduction centred around the political developments of individual nodes of a reconfigured state, as well as a single globally orientated and transnational 'Somali' public sphere which reproduces and commoditises tropes of 'Somali' identity divorced from the individual political contexts of contestation in the former unitary state of Somalia, and indeed the wider Somali territories of the Horn. 'Transnational' here does not simply mean 'diasporic' as both levels of this public sphere involve internationally-mobile and locally-based participants. Furthermore, this duality is conceptualised in political rather than technological terms. Media producers at both the local and transnational levels of Somali political debate generate and reproduce content through multiple technological means. A vast array of audio-visual and print media production (found in radio and television broadcasts, news articles and editorials) is regularly digitalised into an online Somali-language media environment accessible in the Somali territories and in the diaspora. Social media platforms such as Youtube and Facebook intersect and overlap with this content and these networks, further blurring traditional distinctions between 'new' and 'traditional' media.

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

It is the overlap of content across these public spheres, I argue, which helps structure the different focuses of ‘ethno-religious nationalist’ debate and facilitates the apparent malleability of political articulations of *Soomaalinimo*. The existence of a prominent transnational Somali public sphere is itself significant for the various state authorities which have varying (and often limited) power to fully regulate the discursive environment in which they are attempting to assert themselves. The fact that it is so often this transnational face of the Somali public sphere that is the concern of would-be state regulators is indicative of its perceived significance: authorities in Garoowe, Hargeysa and Muqdisho have *all* made sporadic moves against broadcasters such as Universal TV for various alleged transgressions (the most recent instances of office closures or arrests occurring in these capitals were in 2013, 2014 and 2015, respectively).

Previous scholarship has emphasised the influence of the external *on* the local in the Somali context – whether through the ‘recreation’ of conflict via diaspora-based media or the material impact of financial flows such as remittances (Osman 2015, Ahmed 2000, Lindley 2008). This chapter has taken a somewhat different approach that has emphasised how the Somali media ecology is structured by a pervasive transnationalism: by the mobility of elite producers; by the cross-border broadcasting of important Somali-language media networks; or by the frequent ‘international’ focus of ostensibly local media on issues affecting the global *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*. This account thus allocates greater agency to individuals in the Somali territories as globalised producers and consumers in the urban public sphere(s). The next chapter attempts to further elaborate on these dynamics through a particular case study of this type of transnational media production, consumption and popular appropriation in action.

3. Media technologies and political reconfiguration: the Somali public sphere(s)

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination in the Somali-language public sphere

Fig. 4.1



- Man in red: 'The Somali politician [pictured in the chair] sees this as being in his interest. Oh Allah may you bestow on Somalia a patriotic politician'.
- Man with stick: 'Amen to Allah'.

4.1. Introduction

Online and in print, Amin Amir's ('Amin Arts') political cartoons are a distinctive and prevalent feature of news media and political commentary in Somalia. Unlike other prominent East African political cartoonists (such as Kenya's Godfrey Mwampembwa, AKA Gado) who produce work for a single major national newspaper and are syndicated in various international publications, Amin Arts' cartoons are produced and reproduced across the diverse and highly fragmented world of Somali news media. The cartoonist maintains a personal website (aminarts.com) and his images find their way – often 'copy-and-paste' fashion - into the myriad Somali-language news websites, blogs, forums and print media across the patchwork of regional authorities or de facto independent states that make up what remains defined on the political map as the nation-state of Somalia. Amin Amir is undoubtedly the most popular cartoonist at work on the Somali political scene, and there are very few other producers of this particular type of visual commentary in the Somali-language 'public sphere' of political commentary and popular debate.

Insofar as a unitary Somali state ceased to exist a quarter of a century ago, and given the continued fragmentation of political power across the Somali territories, it is remarkable that any single political commentator has the type of widespread distribution and reproduction enjoyed by Amin Amir. His consistent lament at the predicament of Somalia and his critiques of the venal politicians and malign foreign influences at work at the heart of elite politics, clearly strike a chord with audiences both inside Somalia and in the global Somali-speaking diaspora. It is from this

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

position of geographical detachment that the cartoonist – based in Canada – comments, both on the daily developments and intrigues of different contexts local or regional politics in Somalia or on the wider ‘national’ concerns of the community addressed as the global *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*, the Somali Ummah - a supranational projection of shared identity based on a common religion (Islam) and ethnic descent.

This chapter situates its analysis of Amin Amir with reference to three interlinked bodies of scholarship on the modern public sphere: popular geopolitics, civic agency, and the role (or ‘cyber-subjectivities’) of ‘digital diasporas’. I examine the role of Amin Amir’s cartoons in reflecting and conditioning popular orientations towards geopolitical discourses and utilise recent literature on African civic agency in the public sphere, particularly with regard to the commonly invoked theme of ‘resistance’. The chapter engages with literature exploring the possibilities which transnational and diasporic-influenced public spheres afford for de-territorialized forms of political identification or nationhood. In responding to recent calls in the popular geopolitics literature for greater focus on audience reception and interpretation of media texts, the chapter analyses the cartoons in the context of their reproduction within the media ecology of Somalia. I argue that greater attention needs to be paid to the ways in which different forms of production (the political cartoon for instance) hold significance in particular media environments. The political, technological and cultural contours of the Somali public sphere mean that certain visual and linguistic characteristics of the political cartoon format (taken for granted in other contexts) are themselves of importance to ongoing contestations over Somali state reconfiguration and broader geopolitical discourses.

The chapter surveys these three bodies of literature highlighting the ways in which this case study both aligns with and diverges from recent conceptualisations of popular geopolitics and (transnational) civic agency. The practicalities and constraints of media production in Somalia are then outlined, and the position of this particular producer and his form of commentary is contextualised. A selection of Amin Amir’s cartoons is then critically analysed in terms of its discursive content and appeal to Somali nationalist sentiment. This sample is representative, I argue, of his much wider body of work and is divided into three thematic sections: a critique of foreign intervention and the ‘venal politician’; critiques of ‘clanism’; and a discussion of cultural or religio-political ‘imports’ in processes of state contestation. Bringing back into focus the transnational dynamics of the Somali public sphere, the chapter then considers the cartoonist’s position as a diasporic cultural producer vis-à-vis the contestation ongoing within processes of reconstructing the state (or states) across the Somali territories. I conclude by arguing that Amin Amir’s work epitomises the inherent trans-nationalism of Somali public spheres as introduced in the previous chapter. This globalised orientation is perceived and understood as such by local and external producers and consumers of Somali-language media, and has a profound influence on the parameters of discursive contestation taking place over the re-emergence of state structures. Instead of conceiving of these cartoons primarily as a product of the diaspora (and analysing them in terms of the ‘cyber-

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

subjectivity' of those external populations) this chapter conceptualises them as part of the media environment on the ground in Somalia.

4.2. Cartoons, critical/popular geopolitics and public sphere 'resistance'

The critical geopolitics literature has long been concerned with the relationship between hegemonic representations of geographically-framed political relations and 'everyday' experiences of power and resistance (Ó Tuathail 1996, 2006; Dodds 1996; Hammett 2011). Dittmer and Dodds note that whilst analyses of geopolitical representation and discourse remain important, only recently have focuses begun to shift 'towards audience interpretation, consumption and attachment' (2008, 437) of texts which reflect, condition or challenge popular perceptions of local or global power relations. The writers here cite Thrift's contention that overemphasis on geopolitical 'representations' overlooks the 'little things' of how '(and therefore why) geo-power is actually practiced' (2000, 380). They go on to argue that 'everyday practices such as the consumption of news media and serialised popular culture need to be connected to our interest in the representational qualities of maps and other geopolitical objects' (Dittmer and Dodds 2008, 445).

This chapter takes up this approach by critically examining the ways in which Amin Amir's diasporic cartoons are disseminated, consumed, and reproduced inside Somalia itself. My fieldwork across different political centres in southern Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland brought me into contact with the cartoons as reproduced in various newspapers, websites and civil-society political engagements. Whilst this research did not focus on gathering a large sample of audience reactions to the cartoons specifically, my following theoretical discussion of the case study is underpinned by several observations derived from my study of this media environment 'on the ground' in Somalia. Firstly, there is no other individual political commentator (using cartoons or other media) whose work is reproduced so widely across the different public spheres of a fragmented Somalia. Secondly, such widespread dissemination is, in part, a function of audiences' ability to selectively utilise different cartoons from the artist's prolific output speaking to particular regional events or in support of various political positions – this I conceptualise in terms of Hills' notion of 'performative consumption' where consumers' agency is demonstrated in the strategic deployment of selected material (Hills 2002; Dittmer and Dodds 2008). Thirdly, the popularity of Amin Amir's cartoons was commonly related to me in terms of his perceived neutrality: detectable for audiences through his desire to critique multiple political elites and aided by his position of relative security in the diaspora, as well as his own (marginalised) clan background. Furthermore, I argue that the relative novelty of the political cartoon form (visually and linguistically) in the Somali media environment is a factor in the cartoonist's popular reception: it productively and provocatively utilises humour as well as highlighting dynamics of cultural contestation in which the cartoonist plays a particular ideological role.

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

Each of these observations speak to the importance of situating popular geopolitical media production within local contexts of consumption. There is increasing literature on African, Middle Eastern and diasporic media production in the form of cartoons, satire and humour which illuminates the myriad devices by which power is challenged (or re-inscribed) in imaginative and important ways. Often, however, I find the contextual backdrops offered for such production raising further questions, particularly around language usage and class or ethnically-influenced patterns of consumption. What is the significance, for example, of cartoonist Zapiro's own cultural or class background and his use of English in the dissemination and reproduction of his work in South Africa (Hammett 2010; Zapiro 2010; Mason 2010; Eko 2010; Dodds 2010)? Similarly, for whom is English-language anti-state propaganda in Zimbabwe aimed at? How does it circulate within the country (Hammett 2011)? Are jokes in Nigeria which critique the state (and form an auto-critique of national identity) delivered and re-interpreted in languages other than English? If so, where and how (Obadare 2009)? What are the ethnic or class politics of language choices – between English and Amharic – in Ethiopian or Eritrean diaspora media (Skjerdal 2011; Bernal 2014)? How does an (Arabic) lingua franca influence production in an Arab public sphere engaged in anti-imperialist political cartooning? Does the form of the political cartoon have the same history, status or popularity in each of the different national media contexts (Falah et al. 2006)? Does the alleged 'liberal' potential of internet-based discursive connectivity, as analysed by Brinkerhoff (2006), have anything to do with the linguistic (English) basis of the particular (Somali) diaspora network studied? To what extent can this be representative of a far wider Somali-language sphere operating betwixt and between the diaspora and the Horn of Africa and engaging multiple (and not necessarily liberal) political-religious subjectivities?

In teasing out important theoretical distinctions between, for example, discourse and narrative, or language and practice (Müller 2008) such 'little' or seemingly self evident things as language, audience composition, place or media form, may prove to loom rather 'large' in analysis. It is my own focus on the place and deployment of diasporic media in the Somali territories (as well as my professed ignorance of the 'on the ground' media realities of the other contexts referenced above) which prompt my questions above on this range of public sphere geopolitical media. I recognise that the answers to many of these questions may be difficult to uncover ethnographically, particularly in 'closed' political contexts where subversive anti-state media production is highly sensitive. Whilst Somalia is - in many ways - a highly dangerous environment for journalists to work in, the decentralised and transnational nature of media production across multiple political territories - where political authorities have relatively limited capacity to systematically control media flows - affords various opportunities for a researcher to comparatively examine the ways in which different media products are popularly consumed and utilised. This chapter thus offers a semi-ethnographic account of media consumption in Somalia which examines the discursive output of a particular diasporic producer in the context of the wider Somali public sphere. It attempts to demonstrate how the very

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

form of the media and the identity of the producer themselves can both reflect and condition debates ongoing on the ground over Somali state reconstruction and conflict.

This approach engages with a recent trend in the scholarship on civic agency in Africa which has involved a shift in focus away from realms of organised civil society and onto the public sphere and popular culture in analyses of multiple forms of resistance – whether multi-directional, radical, mundane, vernacular, universalised, structured or spontaneous. Obadare and Willems emphasise the ‘fractured sovereignty’ of the African state and the ‘disruptive influence of the global economic system on the ordinary African’ as contexts in which ‘parallel infrastructures [of resistance are] mobilised, plotted and enacted’ (2014, 2). Their volume highlights the various nuanced ways in which resistance can be interpreted, and their conceptualisation of this notion transcends reductive formulations of a reified ‘unified and heroic subaltern subject’ (*Ibid*, 7; Abu-Lughod 1989). In understanding civic agency, many of these debates centre around Mbembe’s discussion of popular ridicule of elites and the extent to which such expressions in popular culture and local vernaculars constitute challenges to power relations or represent (as he would have it) the potential reinforcement of political hierarchies through ‘conviviality’ (2001, 110; Obadare & Willems 2014, 7; Hammett 2010, 8). Whilst resistance here is appropriately problematised – and binaries of subordination/domination are jettisoned – the nature of the case studies explored necessitates a continued focus on the relationship between ‘ordinary’ Africans and the ‘official’ in terms of state structures or power holders.

This is the point from which my analysis of political cartoons in the Somali public sphere somewhat diverges. Given the prolonged conditions of flux and contestation that characterise Somali state-structures and state-society relations (where these can be clearly discerned), it is difficult to read public sphere agency primarily in terms of ‘resistance’, nor in distinctions between ‘official’ and ‘informal’ media and communication. Instead, political and thus media fragmentation across Somalia creates an environment where public sphere or ‘civic’ agency can be conceived of as producing the discursive spaces in which political organisation is legitimised or struggled against. This is not to argue that resistance is absent from the discursive framing of Amin Amir’s work; on the contrary, the analysis below highlights how his representation of the ‘poor’ Somali ‘population’ (*shacabka masakiinta*) is fundamental to his speaking of truth to power holders. Nevertheless, from an analytical standpoint I argue that a more productive framing of his ‘civic agency’ involves a focus on the cartoonist’s position – in terms of his cross-sectional influence, his generational ideological perspective, his location in the diaspora, and the technological means through which his material is disseminated. These factors are indicative of the transnational dynamics which characterise the Somali public sphere and, crucially, the debates which are ongoing in Somalia over the ideological, cultural and religious foundations of reconfigured Somali statehood(s).

Amin Amir is as much an ‘African’ cultural producer as Zapiro (Jonathon Shapiro), the white South African cartoonist who is a prominent subject of many of the contributions to *Critical African*

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

Studies' Special Issue on political cartoons and satire in Africa in 2010. The focus on Zapiro's provocative output yields valuable insight into the discursive dynamics of the post-Apartheid media environment and parameters of political debate. However, I emphasise here the value of engaging with other contexts of African public sphere production which differ vastly from the South African experience. Unlike Zapiro, Amin Amir is not published in major national newspapers but instead disseminates his work (widely) through online media and reproductions in multiple local newspapers across the Somali territories, and his cartoons are written in colloquial Somali (not in a national English or French media *lingua-franca* as in the majority of political cartooning studied elsewhere in African public spheres - Wekesa 2012). Importantly, the reality of conflict in Somalia and the dangers faced by journalists or commentators has meant that the cartoonist has based himself outside of the region. This does not, however, limit - and may actually enhance - his ability to reach multiple audiences in a way that virtually no other individual political commentator does in this media environment.

4.3. Diasporic cultural production and activism

Amin Amir's work and its reception epitomise the wider blurring of geographical boundaries found in these transnational Somali public spheres, and represents a collapsing of firm distinctions between diasporic and 'local' artistic production or political commentary. This is a theme grappled with by many recent discussions of globalised African 'cultural production', and as Harrow and Ekotto argue: 'the new conditions of globalization have generated possibilities for subject positions that cannot be simply defined by terms such as 'exile', 'hybrid', 'creole' or 'diasporic'' (2015, 3). Insofar as Amin Amir's popular cartoons are produced for a global audience identifying with a Somali political context regardless of their geographical location, his influence on what is an inherently transnational public sphere clearly transcends such reductive labels.

The peculiar nature of the political cartoon itself (residing somewhere between 'artistic' cultural production and direct political commentary or activism) shifts the focus for our critical engagement. If a recurring theme in African cultural studies is the stylistic or thematic gulf between material produced for 'local' (read 'African') and 'international' (read 'white/western') audiences – mediated through the 'geodeterminism' of publishing opportunities and the market (Ibironke 2015, 38) – then the transnational popularity of Amin Arts represents a very different setting for production and consumption. The paper collapses these firm distinctions between diasporic and local content firstly by discursively analysing the themes of the cartoons in the context of the media environment in Somalia, and secondly by interpreting the geographical detachment of this particular producer (from the messy political realities which are his subject matter) as an enabling factor in his presentations of nationalist identity, political critique and generational or cultural identity to multiple audiences across the Somali territories.

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

Much scholarship on diaspora media or online engagement with countries of origin focuses attention on the influence that such media production has on diaspora communities themselves - the importance of cyber-subjectivities for identities in 'host' countries, or recreations of conflict in new sites (Georgiou 2006; Horst 2006; Osman 2015). In some cases, the analytical distinction between a dispersed and diverse global ethnic community and a single distinct state-dominated 'home' polity is both clear and logical. Victoria Bernal's work on Eritrea and 'deterritorialised identities' focuses on particularly prominent diaspora-based websites and emphasises the role of an online public sphere as an 'imaginatively constructed space' (2005, 661; 2014). Taking the starting point of Anderson's imagined community (2006), Bernal argues that 'one should not see the imaginings of diasporic Eritreans simply as a feature of diaspora, reflecting the nostalgia of people far from home...one should understand them as part of the construction of Eritrean nationhood' (2005, 669). Her argument proceeds with a call for a re-theorizing not of cyberspace itself but the wider public sphere, where online infrastructure does not simply facilitate access to 'information', but provides discursive arenas for new imaginations of nationhood to be constructed (*Ibid*, 672). The online Dehai platform, she argues, has served as an experimental space for alternative forms of knowledge or cultural production that de-territorialize emotive attachments to the nation-state. Other work (Skjerdal 2008) on Ethiopian diaspora journalists highlights both the possibilities that a detached transnational public sphere offers to political exiles critiquing the state, as well as the potential ideological blurring that occurs between 'journalists' and 'activists' in this decentred media environment.

There are several important differences between Eritrean (and Ethiopian) public sphere case studies and the Somali context which have an important bearing on my own analysis. Firstly, the political context in Eritrea around which Bernal's transnational public sphere operates is dominated by a single, functioning authoritarian state which has a high level of control over domestic media and even the capacity to extract resources from the diaspora community itself (De Waal 2015). In this sense it can be imagined that the state – dominated by the (omni)presence of President Afewerki – can serve as a focus of the intellectual, creative and/or rebellious activity of transnational platforms of debate. A contrast with Somalia could hardly be more striking: multiple state projects exist with a varied level of (comparatively minimal) control over media and political communication. It is difficult to assess the potential for online engagement in the forums discussed by Bernal by citizens inside Eritrea given levels of censorship and online media control, and whilst her account touches on the impact of these platforms on politics inside Eritrea (for example the rumours about political elites using pseudonyms to participate in these transnational debates) this element of the analysis seems secondary to a focus on imaginings of the Eritrean nation within the diaspora itself.

This account of the Somali public sphere emphasises the blurring of the boundaries between local and diasporic intellectual discursive production and proposes a dual conceptualisation of Somali public spheres: there exist local public spheres which coalesce around particular political projects (the Somaliland print news media, for example: Hoehne 2008), alongside wider networks based both in

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

the diaspora and in the region which attempt (and in some cases succeed) to speak to a broader transnational Somali audience, the *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*. It is into this latter arena that the work of Amin Amir operates, although, as my subsequent analysis shows, local actors may selectively appropriate this material for particular sectional agendas. Crucial here is the sense that participants in this media environment perceive themselves to be members of a global Somali community (often regardless of or alongside their political/regional affiliations in the Horn) and that this transnational subjectivity creates the space in which multiple discursive strategies (political Islam, pan-Somali ethno-nationalism, for example) can gain audiences and traction.

It is important to clarify the political-geographical focus of my analysis of these particular texts, not merely as a disclaimer but rather for its relevance to my wider argument. Whilst the use of the term ‘Somalia’ refers, in the broadest sense, to the internationally recognised borders of that nation-state, the analysis attempts to situate the various power structures and or state/administration constructions within the context of the visual rhetoric analysed. Given that Amin Arts’ cartoons often focus on southern Somalia (i.e. events as seen from and in Muqdisho [Mogadishu]), my analysis will primarily focus on these images. However, it is significant that the cartoonist engages with other Somali political arenas such as that of the Republic of Somaliland. I make occasional reference to this material to demonstrate how subtle thematic or discursive differences in the portrayals of different political actors or environments are indicative of one particular (but influential and illuminating) external conception of political identity across the Somali Horn of Africa. Although Amin Amir has been making political cartoons since the 1990s, the individual images analysed here are taken from the period 2012-2015 and deal with the current presidency of Xasan Sheekh Maxamuud and issues related to the ongoing process of state reconstruction, federalisation and conflict against *Harakat Al Shabaab Al Mujaahidiin* (AS).

4.4. Cartoons in context: the Somali media environment and visual cultural production

Amin Amir’s work is visible in various forms of Somali news media and political communication, and few other artists employ this medium of commentary and satire to reach such wide audiences across and beyond the Somali territories. Divisions of political authority across Somalia are mirrored in the fragmentary nature of the media environment. As discussed in the previous chapter, aside from several large and externally-based Somali-language broadcasters, the news-media market is characterised by multiple private FM radio-stations usually focused in and around specific areas or cities. These are supplemented by newspapers which are primarily consumed in the specific urban areas where they are printed. As for online news – the primary (but not exclusive) vector by which Amin Arts’ cartoons are disseminated – the market is highly fragmented with hundreds or even thousands of localised news websites competing for ‘hits’.

In this online milieu the cartoons of Amin Amir are reproduced across the Somali regions through news sites and social media forums such as Facebook, itself an important conduit into news

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

media. Given the range of regions and political contexts addressed by the cartoons, reproduction in various locations and forums is often highly selective: a cartoon critiquing this or that politician in this or that region/government will be picked up on by a local news broadcaster or commentator to make a specific political point. The fact that Amin Amir is generally seen to be critical of virtually all power-holders across Somalia serves to popularise his work and allows it to be employed by multiple actors with different positions or agendas.

While visual political commentary or communication may be apparent in the various urban centres of fragmented modern Somalia, when one considers the (varying but limited) role or power of state or administrative entities, it should not be surprising that commercial advertising is far more prevalent and visible in daily public life. Hargeysa is an urban centre where visual political communication is particularly obvious, often in the form of monuments and murals commemorating the nationalist struggle against the Siyaad Barre dictatorship and the eventual emergence of the state structures of the *de facto* independent Republic. In comparison, the internationally recognised Somali Federal Government (SFG) based in Muqdisho has much less capacity to communicate visually on the streets of the capital. Visual government communication is not, however, entirely absent and political artwork sometimes appears in the political centre of the city: murals contrasting the chaos of past conflict with the benefits of contemporary peace (however fragile or however often punctuated by sporadic AS violence) may be seen outside the Parliament complex, or posters at the important KM4 junction depict the role and benefits of taxation for the development of society and state services.

Amin Arts' cartoons are themselves used in the performance of politics in Muqdisho and are shown below (Figures. 4.2 and 4.3) featured on the banners of a 'youth' demonstration (organised by the regional Benaadir administration) against AS. One of the cartoons used on the banners - depicting a would-be AS suicide bomber being dragged to the execution ground by the regional security forces - can actually be read primarily as a critique of the police and national security forces who were allegedly 'sleeping' while the Benadir regional administration carried out their own security operations. Here we see how multiple meanings can be 'encoded' in and 'decoded' from the images (Hall *et al.* 1980; Pillai 1992), as well as the different possibilities which exist for their reproduction and utilisation. Reflecting on why that image stood out to me as a subjective external observer, I must note that the whimsy of the cartoonish image jarred with the grim reality of the stakes and firing squad which are photographed and televised in action. Such executions are themselves highly political acts, choreographed by often beleaguered local state authorities as a demonstration of state power against those that contribute to instability in the city (whether government soldiers accused of killing civilians or AS itself).

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

Fig. 4.2



Fig. 4.3¹



In the context of visual communication in contemporary urban Somalia, tensions exist between certain doctrinal interpretations of Islam and what may be considered appropriate artistic expression in this Muslim society. Highly orthodox Sunni schools of Salafi (or ‘Wahhabi’ influenced) politico-religious thought play a role in the public sphere, and injunctions against the recreation of images of humans may, in part, explain the relative infrequency of the depiction of people, epitomised elsewhere by Amin Amir’s cartoons. In Hargeysa, for instance, it is common to see paintings of people on the streets (for example, in posters or murals advertising NGO activities) which have been literally defaced - presumably by passers-by with religiously-inspired iconoclastic intent (cf. Noyes 2013, 176). Whilst further research would be required to adequately conceptualise such acts in the wider context of visual culture in this media environment, it is noteworthy that the very *form* of the satirical cartoon itself cannot simply be taken for granted here as a ‘standard’ or universally accepted mode of civic agency, and carries with it potentially contested meaning and significance in itself.

Similarly, much can be read into the ‘cultural’ iconography visible in the demonstration in Muqdisho by young people (and political authorities) referenced and pictured above. For example, the use of English as well as Somali in the banners is striking (an appeal to multiple audiences), and at the speakers’ table are positioned items considered as quintessential ‘Somali’ cultural paraphernalia (the traditional *haan* water container, here emblazoned with the national flag). Themes of nationalist and Islamic identity will be revisited below in the discursive analysis of a selection of Amin Amir’s cartoons below, and also in a discussion of what I refer to as the artist/cartoonist’s generational identity.

As the previous chapter has demonstrated, the history and status of the written Somali language takes on a certain political or nationalist relevance within processes of state or administration-building across Somalia. The linguistic role of journalists or political commentators is frequently recognised by those individuals themselves, or donors or political authorities seeking to

¹ News story originally published on Jowhar.com: ‘Dhalinyarada 17-ka degmo ee gobolka Banaadir oo isu soo baxay uga soo horjeedaan Al Shabaab ka dhigay Muqdisho’ [Youth of 17 districts of Banaadir region demonstrate together against Al Shabaab in Muqdisho] webpage no longer active, pictures in writer’s archive. August 26, 2014.

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

build their professional capacities. The use of the vernacular - as is usually the case in Amin Amir's cartoons, where the discussants are often the 'ordinary' people who watch politics or conflict unfold, or are victims of it - is also rare to see in written popular culture or news media. This is not to suggest that written print culture (e.g. novel writing) does not exist - the holding of book fairs in Hargeysa and Muqdisho demonstrates a desire to promote written Somali cultural production and these events hold political significance both in regard to processes of state-building and the role of literacy and 'cultural' expression for societal development. It is fair to say, however, that the novel is not a prevalent form of cultural expression consumed widely by people across the Somali territories.

If news media constitutes one of the few formats in which most people across the Somali territories engage with formal written Somali, then Amin Amir's cartoons represent a rather unique popular usage and reproduction of colloquial written Somali. In analysing these cartoons in the modern Somali context it is thus necessary to recognise that the very visual or linguistic form of this type of communication cannot simply be taken for granted. In itself the cartoon form holds 'cultural' significance across political environments where debates are ongoing as to the role of the state in the preservation or promotion of the Somali language and the parameters of religiously or culturally appropriate artistic expression.

4.5. Amin Arts' constant critique: humour and discourse analysis approach

With the previous section exploring the status of the form of the political cartoon in regards to the particular political, cultural, visual and linguistic dynamics of the Somali public sphere, the chapter now proceeds with critical discourse analysis of a selection of specific Amin Arts' 'texts'. Based on my research and professional experience as a consumer of Somali-language media across Somaliland, Puntland and south-central Somalia since 2009, I argue that this sample is representative of several important discursive tropes employed in his wider work: namely, critiques of external interventions in Somali politics, the role of venal politicians, exhortations against 'clanism'; and frequent appeals to a somewhat nostalgic register of pan-Somali nationalism. Building on the conceptualisation of critical discourse analysis outlined in chapter 2, with specific consideration of the political cartoon form, the following analyses of cartoons as 'texts' identify various discourses which are expressed in the Somali public sphere and the ways in which they structure and are structured by the context (or 'practice') of conflict and state reconfiguration or reconstruction.

Amin Amir's cartoons consistently critique power holders across Somali politics and employ the 'visual language' of signs, conventions and rhetorical devices familiar in political cartoons the world over (Werner, 2003, 83). As with any satirical image, the discursive tool-kit required by the viewer for an understanding of its 'visual argument' (Birdsell & Groarke 1996, 1) includes recognition of its general purpose, and the shared beliefs, assumptions, conventions or practices which allow the image and the text to make sense in a particular environment (Werner 2003, 82).

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

Caricature in Amin Amir's cartoons - the artistic rendering of a recognizable individual through the exaggeration of particular physical features - is less obvious or grotesque than in other examples and it is through a more realist portraiture-rendering of individuals that audience recognition is ensured. Identification of particular types of character (the venal politician or the ordinary or 'poor' citizen) is achieved through the indexical signs of clothing, bodyweight, political emblems as well as text labels where the cartoonist deems them necessary.

In presenting such characters the cartoons can also be seen to employ what Billig describes as the device of 'unlaughter' (2005, 192), the rhetorical utilisation of the *absence* of laughter in a form or situation where it might otherwise be expected. The 'firing squad' cartoon noted above is a good example of this meeting of a grim reality with the apparent whimsy or inherent humour of the medium. This device is often at work in the visual portrayal of similarly grotesque or violent scenes, particularly related to graphic bloodshed and the destruction of the 'ordinary' Somali population.

The most common reaction I noted to Amin Amir's cartoons (when discussing them with people in Somalia) was that of laughter on first sight of the image. Increasing attention in the popular geopolitics literature is being given to the role of humour in reflecting, challenging, subverting, redirecting or remaking power relations (Obadare 2009; Ridanpää 2009; Semati 2012; Dittmer 2013). An important distinction has been invoked here with laughter defined as a physical response [that] 'is not always the response to a conscious reflective and controlled subject... at times laughter has no clear basis in humour - we may laugh and not know precisely why' (Macpherson, cited in Dodds and Kirby 2013, 51). As a subjective individual consumer of Amin Amir's cartoons I find some to be laugh-out-loud funny - particularly those that ridicule power holders with ingenious and absurd visual devices like the figurative political football match, or a 'federalist' political vehicle trying to go four directions at once. Others, which directly portray visceral human suffering are, for me, more difficult to laugh at - they are not 'funny'; I fear that to laugh at them would imply a disrespect to those whose plight is depicted. The fact that people, in my experience, have laughed at all these different 'types' of cartoon speaks to the above distinction as well as amorphous socialised orientations towards humour which are so difficult to define, particularly in a cross-cultural context.

I speculate, however, that responses of laughter have something to do with the novelty of the cartoon form in the context of political commentary in Somalia. The discussion above has briefly introduced the political-religious context of visual communication and it is the distinctiveness of Amin Amir's voice (or portraiture) that makes him such a visible part of the wider media environment, capable of deconstructing and ridiculing countless figures. Laughter may be one response to the unique positioning of this commentator and may reflect tensions around the parameters of culturally acceptable commentary or art which are manifest in the Somali public sphere. Although there are difficulties inherent in gauging the level of applicability of this assertion across different local audiences, it nonetheless highlights again the importance of sensitivity to the cultural

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

context of particular forms of commentary (like the cartoon) whose meanings may take different forms for audiences in different places.

4.5.1. Discursive tropes: foreign intervention and the ‘venal politician’

Amin Amir’s cartoons frequently address a set of specific political themes, often combining them to present an overview of the problems he sees facing Somalia, or, occasionally, to depict a positive development or event. A primary target of the work – and a familiar focus of ire in political cartooning elsewhere – is the venal politician. This (invariably male) character, sells out the Somali nation to other corrupt power holders or external actors with malign intent. The cartoon featured at the beginning of the chapter (Figure 4.1) is a characteristic example of the visual rhetoric employed by the cartoonist in his presentation of a grand theme of modern Somali political discourse: the division of Somalia by neighbouring powers and the complicity of local political actors. In the image the cartographically defined shape of the Somali state (i.e. the borders recognised by the ‘international community’) coloured in the sky-blue of the Somali flag, is being shattered by the jackboot of Ethiopian power, on top of which rides the diminutive ‘Somali politician’ seated in his all important ‘chair’ of political power. Whilst it is the visual argument that does most of the work here – the fragility of Somalia embodied in the shattered glass metaphor, alongside the blunt impact of a (literally) big regional power – the speech bubbles and the identity of the speakers are not insignificant. There is a lament at the intentions of contemporary politicians and a call to the divine for aid for those who are ‘patriots’.

The dialogue here comes from the two older gentlemen pictured on the left, one dressed in a *macawis* (the male sarong-like garment worn often across Somalia, and considered a ‘traditional’ or typically ‘Somali’ item of clothing - although they are often imported) and holding a walking stick. The other sports a more ‘western’ look - perhaps hinting at the diaspora or different fashions of male dress in Somalia. These two particular characters, offering sage comment over what they observe, are a common feature of the cartoons and are presented to demonstrate the wisdom of age and experience over a changed Somali political or social reality. Standing always in witness over proceedings (and never part of the action themselves), the two gentlemen could almost be seen as avatars of the cartoonist: himself somewhat detached from events and yet engaged in them, himself of an older generation (Amin Amir is in his mid 50s)².

² While it is appropriate to treat with caution any potentially reductive discussion around the position of ‘traditional elders’ in Somali politics (*odayaal dhaqameed* - the literal translation which is used commonly in the media and popular discourse) it is certainly true that in other forms of Somali print media the image of older male commentators is often used. The twin cartoon figures of the Maansha Allaah and Wager feature in Hargeysa’s Jamhuuriya newspaper offer two different perspectives on various issues of the day, while the image of Carraale Waddani, replete with macawis, stick and shawl, in Hargeysa’s Ogaal newspaper, also gives the reader the benefit of his critical wisdom.

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

Fig. 4.4



- Ethiopia stealing 'the country' from back pocket of Somali politician reaching for 'seat' (while standing on a 'patriot')
- Man in hat: 'Allah save us!'
- Woman: 'As he searches for the seat the country is taken'
- Man on left: 'Is that what Vision 2016 is like?'

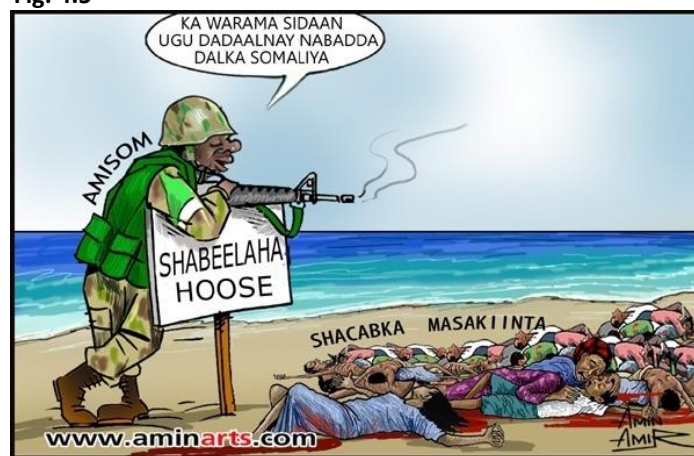
Figure 4.4 again addresses the theme of foreign intervention, this time drawing comment (and explicit explanation of the unfolding action) from ordinary citizens who witness the interaction between the suit-wearing politicians and the downtrodden (and barefoot) 'patriot'. On this occasion, one of the observers makes more specific reference to political developments in Somalia by indicating his perception of 'Vision 2016', the Muqdisho-based Federal Government's internationally-backed transitional framework for constitutional review and elections as the term of current President Xasan Sheekh Maxamuud expires. The cartoon reflects popular frustrations with the political machinations of international powers to divide Somalia in the carving of federal states out of the patchwork of regional power holders, with Ethiopia playing a primary role in this allegedly nefarious conspiracy. Elsewhere this is a prevalent theme particularly in media and political comment in Muqdisho³ and frequent reference is made to historical enmity with the Ethiopian 'Xabashi' neighbour and its role following the collapse of the Somali state, notably, during its full-scale invasion in 2006 to oust the *Midowga Maxaakiimta Islaamiga* (The Union of Islamic Courts). This intervention paved the way for the installation of a transitional and then internationally recognised federal government more palatable to the 'international community' and set in motion the dynamics which would empower AS as a significant political actor and insurgent force (Hansen 2013).

³ See Cabdullahi Ibrahim Cumar's June 8, 2014 editorial: '*Taageerayaasha SNM iyo SSDF oo fuliyey balanqaadyadii ay la galeen Xabashida*' [SNM and SSDF supporters fulfil the promise they made with the Xabash] Keyd Media: <http://www.keydmedia.net/editorial/article/taageerayaasha-snm-ssdf-oo-fuliyey-balanqaadyadii-ay-la-galeen-xabashida/> (accessed May 21, 2015). Article now available at: <http://caasimadda.com/taageerayaasha-snm-ssdf-oo-fuliyey-balanqaadyadii-ay-la-galeen-xabashida%E2%80%8F/>

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

The emergence of the northern breakaway or semi-autonomous states of Somaliland and Puntland is frequently discussed in southern-Somali political commentary in terms of their status as alleged proxies or clients of Ethiopia, and such accounts often reference the neighbouring state's historical relationship with movements fighting the Siyaad Barre dictatorship. Intriguingly, whilst Amin Amir's cartoons often focus on the role of Ethiopia (and Kenya) with regard to the southern or central regions of Somalia (the emergent Jubaland State, the Southwest state and the Galmudug region, all at various stages of administration formation), there are few portrayals of Somaliland as an Ethiopian 'proxy', perhaps with the view to avoid alienating audiences in the northwest, or as indicative of the artist's conception of polity as a distinctly separate political space.

Fig. 4.5



AMISOM soldier (standing over bodies of the 'poor population': 'So, how about our efforts for peace in Somalia?')

Whereas Ethiopian influence in Somalia is usually depicted in the form of political conspiracy, other contingents of the African Union Mission for Somalia (AMISOM) are often critiqued for the direct impact of their on the wider population. Despite its labelling as a 'peace-support' mission, the AMISOM mandate extends to direct military engagement against AS and its contingents are involved alongside SFG forces in the capture of territory and counter-insurgency operations. Figure 4.5 was produced in response to the alleged killing of civilians in Merka, Lower Shabelle region by Ugandan forces on patrol in the town⁴. The spilling of the blood of the figurative body politic of Somalia is a common theme of the cartoons and often takes the graphic form of the population literally ground between or pulled apart by the various political or military powers.

⁴ Human Rights Watch statement August 18, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/08/13/somalia-au-forces-linked-wedding-killings>

Fig. 4.6.



There is often a gendered element to this embodiment of the nation, exemplified in Figure 4.6 where the woman dressed in the blue and white of the Somali flag (also evocative of the young anti-colonial martyr Xaawo Taako) is dragged away by AMISOM, while the Somali press remains restrained from reporting. Again, this image refers to a specific event or period: throughout 2014 alleged sexual violence perpetrated by AMISOM and Government Forces was very much in the media and controversy followed the imprisonment of journalists accused of spreading ‘false’ news⁵. At the same time, there are wider visual arguments that could be read into this image regarding its gendered nationalist rhetoric and the ‘rape’ of Somalia by foreigners.

The depiction of the Ugandan AMISOM troops typically emphasises racialized differences in appearance (in terms of skin tone, facial features), and whilst, on one hand, this can be interpreted simply as the cartoonist’s device for audience character recognition, it does also hint at a perceived and expressed distinction between Somali and non-Somali (or ‘African’) subjects. Tensions between ‘African’ and ‘Islamic’ or ‘Arab’ components of ‘Somali’ identity is a complicated subject, particularly when one considers the relevance of tropes of relative religious, ethnic, or linguistic homogeneity in Somali popular culture, alongside realities of ethnic and linguistic diversity found across the Somali Horn. The point ventured here is simply that this particular cartoonist employs a visual style in his presentation of the Somali population which distinguishes it (ethnically) from those characters drawn as foreign or external.

⁵ Radio Muqdisho, February 5, 2013, ‘Maxkamada G/Banaadir oo xukun ku riday Wariye Koronto iyo haweeney loo haystay faafinta kufsi been abuur ah’ [Banaadir Regional Court passes sentence on Journalist Koronto and woman held for spreading false news about rape] <http://radiomugdisho.net/archives/maxkamada-gbanaadir-oo-xukun-ku-riday-wariye-koronto-iy-haweeney-loo-haystay-faafinta-kufsi-been-abuur-ah/>

4.5.2. Discursive tropes: clan and ‘clanism’

Fig. 4.7



Fig. 4.8



Fig. 4.7 ‘Somalia’ chained to the fire and destruction of ‘clan’, held back from obtaining the prize of nationhood.

Fig. 4.8

- Reporter: ‘Mr Attorney General, if it is the case that many people have stolen government property, then why is it just this man who has been arrested?’
- Attorney General: ‘This man’s clan isn’t big so I know I can try out my power on him’

Subtle discourses of ethnicity also overlap with the identification by the cartoonist of ‘clan’ or, more specifically, ‘clanism’ (*Qabiil/Qabyaalad*) as an influential factor in the political situation of Somalia. This is highlighted by the two images translated above. That Somalis are divided through a genealogical system of patrilineal descent (*abtirso* – literally to count one’s forefathers), and that this ‘construct’ (Kapteijns 2012, 11) of collective imagination is a fundamental feature of social organisation, is a tenet of seminal works in the field of Somali studies, many of which date back to colonial-era anthropology (Lewis 1957/1978; 1994). To recognise the continued salience of clan constructs in Somali politics (or in popular perceptions of politics) does not equate to an endorsement of a primordialist conception of clan as the monolithic and timeless determinant of all power and social relations in the Somali context, or a reductionist approach which interprets all conflict through the lens of clan competition. Debates in the literature, particularly post state-collapse, have highlighted the shortcomings of such approaches while emphasising the fluidity of clan-identification and the diversity of material determinants of political change or contestation across the Somali territories (see Barnes 2006; Besteman 1998; Luling 2006; Samatar 1992, 2011).

The concept of clan exists within Somali public spheres of news media, political commentary and activism. Arguments are voiced in a political arena (like in Muqdisho) where clan constructs are institutionalised as a basis for the distribution of political power through the (in)famous ‘4.5’ system. Initially instituted by the previous Transitional Federal Government, the mechanism - which is still in effect - divides representation equally between the four major ‘clan-families’ of the Darood, Digil & Mirifle, Dir, and Hawiye, while retaining a half share for so-called ‘minority’, or *beesha shanaad* – ‘fifth clan’ - groups who fall outside of these major lineages.

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

Figure 4.7 represents a broad conception of a (literally) monolithic malaise of ‘clan’ (*qabiil*) and situates the problem in a nationalist context where the prize of unity (embodied in the flag) remains unobtainable due to the shackles of a destructive past. This broad-brush rendering of the spectre of clan politics is frequently reproduced online and in print. For example, its use for the front cover of Maxamed Cismaan Xaashi’s book *Aafada Qabyaaladda* [‘The catastrophe of clannism’], published in Hargeysa (2014), indicates the image’s blunt resonance across the Somali territories, as well as the ubiquity of Amin Amir’s work in the wider Somali public sphere. It is noteworthy that this image uses the word *qabiil* (clan) rather than *qabyaalad* (clanism), as political commentators or columnists often distinguish between the two: clan or tribe as a natural phenomenon and ordained by Allah so that the peoples of the world might know each other (Xaashi 2014, 14, quoting the Qu’ran, Surat Al-Ĥujurāt), distinct from ‘clanism’, the divisive prejudice often manipulated by outsiders (e.g. the European colonialists) to divide the Somali *Ummah*. Indeed, Amir himself has made this distinction when referring to his work (interview with Universal TV, 2011) and so this image can be read in terms of the individual who is chained to his own *qabiil* as much as he strives for nationalism, and it is this general predicament which can be conceived of as *qabyaalad*.

Figure 4.8 paints a more detailed picture of the cartoonist’s perception of clan and power politics on the ground in Muqdisho. Since 2012 and the formation of the Somali Federal Government, processes of state reconstruction have involved the reclaiming of government property from those groups or individuals who had been occupying it, often since periods of chaos in the city after 1991, and/or through the largely stateless (if not entirely anarchic) development of the city in the following decades. As the state struggles to demonstrate capacity there is frequent debate in the public sphere around which groups in society it is able or willing to act against.

The cartoon here portrays the Attorney General – legal representative of the state, but pictured with pistol in hand – ‘trying out’ his power against an individual whose clan is ‘not many’ (in number). Returning to the theme of ethnicity or race, it is likely here that the cartoonist is depicting as his victim of state authority an individual from the so-called Bantu/Jareer ethnic group(s). Part of the *Beesha Shanaad*, or ‘fifth clan’, this (internally diverse) group is usually considered to be outside of the main ‘Somali’ lineage construct and various groups which fall under this label are believed to descend either from ‘indigenous’ ethnic communities which pre-date ‘Somali’ expansion or from slave populations brought from southeastern Africa during the 19th Century (Eno, Eno & Van Lehman 2010; Hill 2010).

The designation of ‘minority’ status (i.e. those diverse and multilingual groups which fall into the 0.5 of the 4.5 power equation) is problematic not only for the fact that accurate census data regarding population sizes is non-existent, but also in the terminology (in Somali) around these issues. The fact that the term ‘minority’ does not translate easily or clearly into the Somali public sphere of political commentary (I have seen the English term transliterated into ‘*maynoorati*’ or translated as

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

'beelaha laga tira badan yahay' or 'the communities that are less [than others], or outnumbered'⁶) is indicative of the difficulties of defining what this phrase actually means in different contexts in Somalia. For example, is it conceived of as including other coastal populations such as the Benadiri groups believed to descend from Arab settlers, or those speaking Bajuni Swahili dialects on the southern-most coastline? What of the Digil and Mirifle, whose lineage group is considered to be one of the 4 major Somali clan families but is characterised by their use of the *Maay* language or 'dialect', and predominantly agro-pastoral livelihoods, in contrast to the perceived pastoral heritage of the other 3 historically dominant '*samaale*' clan families of the Darood, Dir and Hawiye?⁷

This list could go to consider those groups that are geographically detached from wider kinship networks and thus define themselves in a 'minority' in a given territory. This could apply to the Biimaal subclan of the Dir clan family: the sub-clan being long-term residents of contested areas of Lower Shabelle region, whilst the majority of the Dir clan family reside the northwest in what is now Somaliland and Djibouti. Whether the Dir clan-family grouping includes the Isaaq or not, is another contentious and politically-loaded question (Elmi 2010, 29). Also to be considered is the caste-type occupational groups such as those usually referred to under the collective label of Gabooye, who may be affiliated or bonded to dominant pastoral clan groups?

Although this discussion of the lexicon of the debate raises more questions than it answers, it is necessary to highlight these complexities of the 'minorities' question as they are important for an understanding of the discursive grounding of the cartoon analysed above. Whilst the image hints at the ethnic dimension of clan or 'minority' politics in Muqdisho (almost tantalisingly, as the victim's face is turned away from view), it simultaneously obscures the specific identity of the victim through its use of generalising language - someone who's 'clan is not many'. This device – whether consciously conceived of as such by the artist or not – locates the individual in the wider context of *qabiil* or *qaybyaalad* politics which are discussed across Somalia. This constitutes a conversation about the relationship between clan and national identity/ies (epitomised in the other '*qabiil*' cartoon), while also referencing the status of particular 'minority' groups in the Muqdisho context. Some informants in Muqdisho indicated that the perception of Amin Amir as being from the Reer Benadiri – a label which includes several 'minority' groups and long-time inhabitants of the southern coastal cities, believed to trace descent from Arab traders – contributed to his reputation as a 'neutral'

⁶ See Foore Newspaper, Hargeysa, April 30, 2015, '*Qurbe joogta reer Awdal waxay 90% aaminsan yihiin Somalilandnimada: Madaxweyne Ku-Xigeenka*' [Vice President: 90% of the Awdal diaspora communities believe in Somaliland], the transliterated term 'maynoorati' here refers to those who are not valued or given attention and are in the numerical minority in regards to their political stance (i.e. part one community's attitude toward Somaliland's nationalism). The other example is taken from the Heritage Institute's (billed as Somalia's first think-tank based in Muqdisho) December 2014 report on attitudes towards democracy in the city and the term in Somali ('the people who are outnumbered, or are less [than others]') is used in regards to public support for quotas of political representation. The question of which groups this designation should refer to is not addressed by this report. The English and Somali versions of the report are available from: <http://www.heritageinstitute.org/attitudes-towards-democracy-mogadishu/>

⁷ This discussion is picked up again and elaborated on in Chapter six.

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

commentator on politics⁸. One informant, who self-identified into this group himself, described the way in which these communities were so marginalised in politics that they were perceived not to have such a stake in the dynamics of elite level power sharing and contestation.

While this impression of neutrality in the political game may be a largely popular sentiment (derived not just from the cartoonist's perceived identity but also his constant critique of all manner of different political figures), it does not mitigate the controversy caused by the cartoons. Indeed, another informant told me that he was a close relative of Amir, but that he kept this a 'secret' for fear of retaliation against him by way of family association⁹. Amir's work generates threats and insults on a regular basis, as he has himself stated on various occasions¹⁰. Violence against journalists (whether perpetrated by the state, AS or other interests) has been prevalent across many parts of Somalia and is a theme noted above in the depiction of the gagged reporter¹¹. The cartoonist's physical detachment from this risk is an important aspect of his work and perhaps gives a certain freedom of expression and critique which would not be available to a similarly prominent commentator in Somalia itself.

4.5.3. Discursive tropes: cultural/religious imports and state contestation

Fig. 4.9



Fig. 4.10

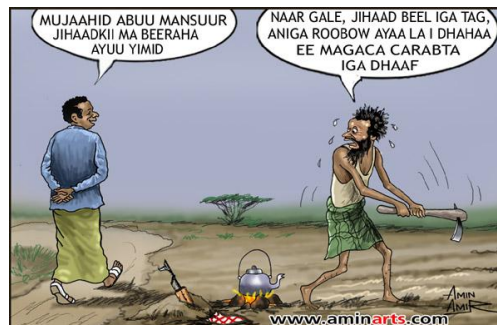


Fig. 4.9

- Man on left: 'Who are this lot? They all look the same'.
- Man on right: 'They're members looking for positions, flooding into the Somali presidency'.

Fig. 4.10

- Passerby: 'Mujaahid Abuu Mansuur, has the Jihad turned into farming?'
- Mukhtar Roobow (AS Commander): 'Go to hell, get the lost Jihad away from me. I'm called Roobow, don't use the Arab name'.

Considering Amin Amir's position as a cultural producer and political commentator located *outside* of Somalia, it is instructive to explore his contributions to local debates (particularly in Muqdisho) surrounding cultural or religious 'imports' and the role of 'returnees' in state reconstruction. His

⁸ Interview, businessman, Muqdisho, February 8, 2015.

⁹ Interview, anonymous, Muqdisho, January 31, 2015.

¹⁰ BBC Somali.com, May 7, 2010, 'Amin Amir wuxuu BBC ku yiri 'Facebook anigu ma lihi'' [Amin Amir tells the BBC that he does not have a Facebook page]:

http://www.bbc.com/somali/news/story/2010/05/100507_amiin_caamir.shtml This has since changed and the cartoonist now links to his Facebook 'opinions' page via his website Aminarts.com.

¹¹ See National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ) Annual Report 2014 'Press Freedom at Risk in Somalia: Murder, Imprisonment, Censorship and Bad Laws':

http://www.ifex.org/somalia/2015/01/13/somalia_annualreport_2014.pdf

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

interventions, I argue, highlight the complexity of these local discussions relating to the cultural and religio-political identity of a reconfigured Somali state, as well as being indicative of the inherent transnationalism of the public sphere in which they take place.

In Figure 4.9 our two wizened commentators are depicted watching a flow of political cadres arrive in Somalia - members of the so-called *Dam al Jadiid* ('New Blood') clique that is popularly understood to have formed the backbone of President Xasan Sheekh Maxamuud's government. Itself a splinter of the political Islamist *Al Islaax* movement and ideologically orientated towards the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's brand of activism in pursuit of state power, this faction has been characterised by strong ties with certain Gulf States, notably Qatar. The cartoon references the disembarking cadres who have all graduated from Egyptian or Sudanese universities. The importance of alumni networks (particularly from Sudanese institutions) has been noted in relation to their role within the establishment and development of different phases of the Islamic Courts' Union experiment in Muqdisho and beyond (Sharif 2015), and my experiences in Muqdisho confirm the continued prevalence of elites in various Ministries and security services with shared backgrounds in such Islamic educational institutions.

The *Dam al Jadiid* cadres are presented here as (literally) faceless foreign imports, arriving to a red carpet reception from various Islamic institutions in Africa, the Middle East or Asia. They all dress the same way, and the short trousers cut above the ankle, make reference to their *salafi* Islamist political-ideological orientations. The clique is continually named by the cartoonist in his critique of President Xasan Sheekh, and is usually portrayed as pulling the strings of his government. The group may be embodied either by these same faceless operators; in the form of specific political elites such as former Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and close confidant of the President, Faarax Sheekh Cabdulqaadir; or as the money men who buy off dissent from Parliament. The cartoonist also attacks what is often popularly perceived of as endemic corruption and vote-buying in the Parliament itself. A popular joke in Muqdisho likens MPs to mobiles phones: they need money put in them for them to work¹².

These cartoons speak to a wider discourse in local political commentary surrounding not only on the role of money in the business of government, but also in regard to the external influences on and identities of those who are perceived to have captured re-emerging state structures. The 'return' of diaspora Somalis to Muqdisho and their role in government is an aspect of this discourse, though the phenomenon itself is multi-faceted and discussed in different ways in the public sphere. Often there is clear recognition of the value of the skills and expertise brought by 'returnees' to the ministries or organisations which are attempting to rebuild themselves, whilst at the same time unease is expressed as to the actual effectiveness of schemes bringing back 'professionals' into high level

¹² Interview, former senior INGO local staff member, Muqdisho, January 31, 2015

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

positions, at the expense of a local work pool of talent. This dovetails with popular accounts of how such systems are open to discrimination and nepotism¹³.

Some arguments focus on the moral or ‘cultural’ impact of the diaspora on conduct and customs which are defined as local, appropriate, Islamic and ‘Somali’. It is important to note that such critiques of ‘foreign values’ do not only come from AS - which targets anyone associated with the Federal Government and threatens those who engage in ‘immoral’ behaviour¹⁴ - but are also found in the wider online or print media. Such discourses are indicative of a wider tension that exists between those who remained in Muqdisho through the bad years and those who may be perceived as swooping in from the diaspora to reap the benefits of improved security, favourable business conditions and other fruits of state reconstruction¹⁵.

Perhaps given his location in the diaspora, it is unsurprising that Amin Amir’s cartoons do not often wade explicitly into this debate. However, the portrayal of Dam al Jadiid as an external influence and the faction’s prevalence in his wider political critique is representative of a certain angle of the ‘foreign influences’ discourse – one which hints at the alien nature of certain political or religious trends. One example could be the development of *salafi* orientated political-Islamist networks, or the *takfiri-jihadi* militancy epitomised by AS, and interpreted by many commentators as a foreign import alien to ‘Somali’ Islam.

Amin Amir takes on the discussion of the role of Islam in political society through a persistent critique of the brutality of AS and their preaching of a ‘false’ Islam. Figure 4.10 satirises the apparent disappearance from the scene of Mukhtar Roobow, a formerly prominent AS commander. Likely due to internal tensions within the organisation, Roobow is currently believed to have retreated to the Bakool region and territory of his clansmen (Bryden 2014, 5). In this cartoon Amir has him as a farmer having both relinquished his Kalashnikov and Arab name – a pointed reference to what the cartoonist may be portraying as externally orientated or inspired Jihad. As noted, the references to doctrinal religious debate or contestation are largely limited to a critique of AS, and Islam often becomes a trope used in the presentation of the good Somali (Muslim) patriot, with an appeal (common to many polemics on unity) to religion and nationalism in the fight against ‘clanism’ or regional factionalism. Space for religious discussion has undoubtedly been constricted in the

¹³ See Xog Doon newspaper, Muqdisho, April 13, 2015, ‘*Maxaa laga dheefey mashruuca QUEST?*’ [What was gained from the Quest program?], a critique of UNDP and IOM program to bring ‘Qualified, Expatriate, Somali, Technical Support’ to Government institutions.

¹⁴ Somalimemo.net, February 28, 2015, ‘*Sheikh Cali Dheere: Duulaanka dhanka akhlaaqda ah ayay gaaladu kusoo qaaday shacabka magaalada Muqdisho*’ [Sheikh Cali Dheere [HMS Spokesman]: The infidels are leading an assault on good conduct against the population of Muqdisho] <http://somalimemo.net/articles/2270/ShCali-Dheere-Duulaanka-Dhanka-Akhlaaqda-ah-Ayay-Gaaladu-Kusooo-Qaaday-Shacabka-Magaalada-Muqdisho>

¹⁵ Keyd Media, September 26, 2014, ‘*Wasiirada DFS oo curyaaminaaya mustaqbalka hablaha soo kacaya – dhaqan xumo!*’ [SFG Ministers compromise the future of girls – bad behaviour!] Article refers to Ministers who have come from the diaspora and have young female aides: <http://www.keydmedia.net/news/article/wasiiradda-dfs-oo-curyaaminaaya-mustaqbalka-hablaha-soo-kacaya-dhaqan-xumo>

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

Muqdisho context for several reasons including trends towards increased Sunni/Salafi orthodoxy; concerns surrounding public morality; the influence of Islamist political or judicial governance networks in the post state collapse period; the ‘sacralisation’ (Vindino, Pantucci & Kohlmann 2010) of the current phase of conflict between AS, the SFG and its external backers; and the persistent threat of violence against those seen to criticise that *takfiri-jihadi* movement. Political assassinations of individuals either directly or indirectly associated or employed by the Somali Federal Government have been a frequent occurrence in Muqdisho with many being linked to AS as part of their campaign to make governance by these re-emergent structures impossible.

Whilst the cartoonist may be removed from the latter threat by virtue of geographical distance, the wider socio-religious context of Muqdisho (changed as it likely is since the last time he was a resident there) no doubt impacts on the tone and emphasis of his work. This detachment can be viewed through the cartoonist’s presentation of daily life in the city – one example might be that he never depicts women wearing the face-covering *Niqab*, now so common in the city – and may also be indicative of his generational identity as well as locus in the diaspora.

4.5.4. Discursive tropes: situating Somaliland

Fig. 4.11



- Radio: ‘This is Radio Hilaac, voice of the people of Somaliland’
- Axmed Maxamed Maxamuud Silaanyo (Republic of Somaliland President): ‘we kicked the Horyaal Radio Station of UDUB off the air, now the founders of Horyaal are opening Hilaac in order to destroy Kulmiye. Since you close the newspapers, why not shut down Radio Hilaac? It is dangerous to us’.
- Xirsi Cali Xaji Xasan (Minister of the Presidency): ‘President, it was not possible to close Horyaal. It is very problematic to close a mobile radio. However, we requested the British and the Ethiopians to keep it off the Somaliland airwaves’.

Amin Amir’s cartoons deal with political and social issues relevant to a global ‘Somali’ audience. They portray events occurring across the territories covered by this thesis, as well as Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti and locations important to the wider diaspora. The cartoons are uploaded daily to Amin Amir’s website, corresponding with issues of the moment - regardless of their location. Viewed as a whole (along with the accompanying Somali advertising speaking to consumers in numerous locations) the website epitomises the trans-nationalism of a public sphere whose audience crosscuts

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

multiple political boundaries. In this setting it is instructive to explore an external presentation of politics in Somaliland, juridically-speaking still part of ‘Somalia’ but forceful in its consistent narrative of secessionist independence.

Figure 4.11 comments on political developments in Somaliland, this time employing the characteristic device of critiques of the stifling of the press. Somaliland’s official political identity is referenced by the flag and the title of the president, while the characters themselves are regular subjects of the cartoonist’s lampooning. Unlike cartoons depicting politics in Muqdisho, the dialogue here makes specific reference to Somaliland’s established and competing political parties, associated in the President’s mind with media conspiracy against his administration.

Pictured with club in hand, President Silaanyo is depicted as an enemy of a free press, and the past practices of his government are referenced in the dialogue. Violence against the press, and the stifling of journalists, is a common theme of the cartoonist’s work, as highlighted above with regard to Muqdisho. Establishing this as an important issue across the political territories, the cartoonist also contributes to a perceived fraternal solidarity of Somali media workers – a phenomenon also alluded to in the previous chapter’s discussion of the National Union of Somali Journalists’ publications which catalogued violations against journalists in a ‘national’ (i.e. Somalia) arena, but also, internationally, with regard to cases of abuse in Ethiopia. Although this sense of cross-border journalistic solidarity may be challenged by the existence of separate media trade unions in Somaliland and Puntland, it nonetheless illustrates how media in the Somali public sphere context can work in their reportage to discursively reproduce particular political structures, whilst also developing a transnational professional identity of their own.

The reference to British and Ethiopian support for the Somaliland government’s control of the media plays on similar tropes of external intervention common in the other cartoons explored here. While this is a subtle critique of Somaliland’s alleged dependence on such external powers, the focus on media freedom deflects the rhetoric away from a direct challenge to Somaliland’s political ‘legitimacy’. Comparing the cartoonist’s treatment of the Somaliland polity to his frequent attacks of the profusion of flag-bearing ‘regional-states’ in the south, it is clear that he regards the former as a far more established political project, worthy of a different level of satirical critique.

Somaliland’s inclusion in the cartoonist’s commentary at once situates it as part of a wider Somali political-imaginary that is regional and global in scope. At the same time, aspects of this presentation establish the polity as a separate political space, notably through the depiction of internal dynamics of partisan electoral competition. As noted above, Amir’s consistent critique of an externally-engineered fragmentation of Somalia via ‘federalism’ rarely directly questions Somaliland’s position in this narrative, and the cartoonist does not explicitly challenge or condemn Somaliland’s secessionist claims - unlike many non-Somalilander commentators in the public sphere. If this can be seen of as a form of neutrality vis-à-vis the macro political narratives of the Somali Horn, then the cartoonist’s critical energies are more often channelled into satire of Somaliland

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

politics at the level of its individual political actors and electoral system. Somaliland here is imagined within the context of an ethnically defined regional public sphere, whilst simultaneously being defined through the critique (and thus reproduction, *a la* Mbembe) of its internal political structures.

4.6. The digital diaspora and civic agency in a transnational public sphere

This final section examines presentations of this particular generational identity and the cartoonist's geographical detachment from the environment on which he comments. This account reflects on the power dynamics inherent in these media production processes and considers the implications of the technological modes of dissemination of these texts for the argument advanced at the outset: namely, that the cartoonist epitomises the type of transnational and multidirectional digital engagement typical of Somali media, itself collapsing simple distinctions between 'local' and 'diasporic' in their productions of discourse on nationhood and political identity in the Somali Horn of Africa.

In an interview given to Universal TV in 2012, Amin Amir discussed his personal history, motivations for work, and feelings about the political situation in Somalia¹⁶. It is clear that the female interviewer and interviewee (Amir) are of the same generation and had known each other working in the creative arts in Muqdisho prior to the collapse of the Somali state. The interviewer notes the changes in society back in Somalia (for example, in terms of dress) and in reply Amir acknowledges that the place he left is different to the country of today. Cultural or historical nostalgia permeates paintings by Amir which are displayed in the studio. He comments on their themes: the image of the young girl cradling the goat and the importance of livestock in 'our culture', 'traditional' dances and celebrations, images of boys learning the Holy Qu'ran using traditional *loox* writing boards, and the beauty of historical sites in Mogadishu – such as the Cabdulaziz Mosque in Muqdisho, damaged during the conflict. Whilst the pair discuss politics at length, none of his cartoons are displayed (presumably to avoid potential controversies or allegations of bias) and the focus is on these paintings of a Somali cultural or historical idyll.

Towards the end of the interview a film is shown which, with modern Somali pop music playing in the background, depicts the cartoonist/artist in his home in Canada and shows him mentoring a teenage boy (of Somali descent) through his art. The video portrays the young man making his way through the streets of the North American city to Amir's home and studio; contrasting the troubled youth's apparent alienation, with the warmth of Amir's family home and the satisfying endeavour of his artistic vocation. The home in question is filled with the type of paintings noted above in the interview, primarily women and children in a past Somali setting. Few *hijab* or *niqab* are

¹⁶ Universal TV, Interview with Amin Amir, uploaded onto UTV Youtube channel June 19, 2012: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIAMIDFZpeY>, the version of this interview uploaded on Saafi Films youtube channel (October 30, 2014), includes an extended version of the film showing Amin Amir at home and it is this version that is referenced in the chapter: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNR_b9n7ubQ

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

visible here; rather women are depicted in the ‘traditional’ attire of the female *guntino*¹⁷. An image of domestic harmony is presented as the young man arrives to watch and learn from the artist at his easel. He is then pictured going home – past the distractions of the fireworks and liquor stores of downtown – and taking up the sketch pad himself, presumably inspired by his meeting with the artist.

The focus then returns to Amir’s home (now with a different background pop song calling on society to give charity, ‘*zakada bixiyo*’) and concludes with a shot of the digital image that he has been working on: a depiction of Ethiopian forces killing civilians in Somalia; a woman exposed on the ground, literally impaled by an Ethiopian flag. Whilst the juxtaposition of this bloody scene and the domestic tranquillity of the artist’s home is unsettlingly stark, this contrast could be read as an attempt to override apparent contradiction by presenting the artist as a detached but engaged observer. Here he is an exemplar of cultural guardianship (in a particular historical imagination of pre-state collapse Somalia), and an activist-commentator on the abuses against the body-politic of modern Somalia perpetrated by external forces. If a generational identity of the artist is highlighted in the work displayed in this piece of self-promotion (the visual references to Somalia before the destruction of the state, and the emphasis on the interplay between Islam and ‘traditional’ Somali cultural practices) then his position in the diaspora and the legitimacy of his digital voice towards the homeland is also a theme pushed in the metaphor of tutelage and the power of art as solace.

This video emphasises civic agency in a transnational public sphere in which there is a lot more going on than ‘resistance’ - however richly that may be conceptualised. This cultural producer operates and exerts power within a specific transnational media context, itself conditioned by the particular political circumstances of Somalia. The previous section alluded to debates in the public sphere in Somalia over the different roles of diaspora returnees in the reconstruction of the Somali state, and here I emphasise the position of the transnational Somali public sphere in empowering media and cultural producers to speak to an audience of Somalis across the various political boundaries. Universal TV – on which this interview was broadcast – is in itself a good example of this phenomenon and is arguably the most popular television channel across political territories including Somaliland, Puntland and urban south-central Somalia.

This observation speaks to the ‘dual’ conceptualisation of the Somali public sphere noted in previous chapters, whereby media flows can be categorised in terms of their local orientation around specific political contexts, and broader networks that engage with a global Somali-speaking population. In a sense, Amin Amir’s work straddles both - the absence of print or online newspapers with a single nation-state focus creates an environment where the images uploaded on the cartoonist’s personal site are disseminated via *copy-and-paste* across the myriad news sites, forums, social media

¹⁷ Akou’s (2012) discussion of the ‘politics’ of dress in Somali culture illustrates the significance of women’s (and men’s) fashion before, during and after the rule of the military regime and highlights the contestation played out through modes of dress over concepts of cultural tradition, anti-colonialism, Islam, secularism and the ‘scientific socialism’ of Barre’s state.

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

spaces and print newspapers across Somalia. At the same time, the *selective* reproduction of the images often corresponds closely with the location of particular media content broadcasters and their political orientations. For example, it is rare in a Hargeysa newspaper or online news site to see an Amin Arts cartoon which addresses specific political developments in Muqdisho. Indeed, news media in Somaliland only very selectively reports events in that ‘other country’, such as news linked to the relations between the governments in Hargeysa and Muqdisho, or those stories which illustrate the continued violence which continues to characterise the south. The role of Universal TV here in broadcasting this interview is also significant and the popularity of this particular channel across the territories in question has already been noted. The channel constitutes an important part of the transnational Somali public sphere in which the cartoonist himself plays a unique and influential role.

Covering this range of political contexts and providing content of interest to numerous audiences is not only indicative of the cartoonist’s perspective from the diaspora over the wider state of ‘Somali’ politics, but may also represent a shrewd commercial strategy in a challenging media marketplace where notions of intellectual copyright are rarely respected. With media revenue being largely generated from advertisements and web-traffic, the development of an Amin Amir ‘brand’ is important and the cartoonist has in the past produced (apparently) commissioned images promoting certain companies. This is indicative of the capacity of this unique producer to influence popular conceptualisations of state politics and political identity across the Somali territories, and should be viewed in the context of the wider development of private, diaspora-based media networks. Online advertising clearly accounts for a significant proportion of the cartoonist’s income and he occasionally produces cartoons which act, in of themselves, as advertisements for large Somali companies, albeit in the context of social good or development:

Fig. 4.12



- Man on right: 'The Golis company has aided the people who have fled from Yemen and transported many of them to their home regions'.
- Man on left: 'Every time they are leading the way when it comes to aid, may God bless them'.

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

Figure 4.12 praises the telecommunications company in question (based in Puntland) for what might be termed a demonstration of corporate social responsibility – its provision of aid for Somali refugees fleeing from Yemen. It is not clear whether this image was commissioned (and paid for) by the company or instead represented a spontaneous comment by the cartoonist on the situation. Once again, bound up in this pseudo-commercial is a call to solidarity for the wider *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*, the fate of which (especially in terms of ‘refugee’ communities around the world) is a common topic in the wider Somali public sphere. The commercial value of the Amin Amir brand, or his endorsement, is indicative of the capacity of this unique producer to influence popular conceptualisations of state politics and political identity across the Somali territories, and should be viewed in the context of the wider development of private, diaspora-based media networks.

4.7. Conclusion

Critically analysing the discourses and potential influence of Amin Amir’s cartoons requires a careful contextualisation of Somalia’s unique public sphere environment and perhaps it should come as no surprise here that amongst the fragmentation and conflict of modern Somali politics, it is a political cartoonist who is (arguably) the most prominent, prevalent and referenced visual commentator. The transnational relationship between the artist and his audience (production, selective application, reproduction) is analogous with other transnational flows of media, politics and finance which characterise so many aspects of life across the Somali territories. The prevalence of media based in the diaspora and beamed into Somalia has been explored above, but it is also important to recall the role of diasporic communities on political change across the different political contexts (Verjee *et al* 2015, 40), and the importance of remittance finance to both national and household economies (Ahmed 2000). The point here is not that all consumers across Somalia are all equally ‘globalised’ or transnational in their cultural or material orientations (certain tensions regarding the role or influence of a specifically defined diaspora community have been highlighted in the chapter) but rather that the particular circuits of political commentary, news media and artistic expression most prevalent across Somalia are characterised by intrinsic elements of trans-nationalism which collapse the distinctions between ‘diasporic’ and ‘local’ production identified and critiqued in other contexts of African ‘cultural production’.

The generational and geographic detachment of Amir, which, combined with self-presentation emphasising his critical neutrality, enables him to provide specific pointed commentary as well as grand ethno-nationalist statements which are acceptable to a wide range of audiences – often receiving the material through the selections and mediations of an anarchic digital news marketplace. The scope of the cartoonist’s critical gaze across the Somali territories serves to address a *single* broadly ethnically-defined Somali ‘imagined community’ (to borrow Anderson’s conception of the emotive basis of nationalism), which is divided by *multiple* political boundaries and regimes of authority. Whether these exist in the form of sovereign states or the sub-state administrations of what

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

is still officially considered to be ‘Somalia’, is not of great importance to this conceptualisation of *Soomaalinimo* incorporating, as it does, the lingering echo of the ‘Greater Somalia’ ideal (Barnes 2007), and a fluidity of transnational identification.

This is not to suggest that the various political boundaries are, in themselves, unimportant: a self-identifying ‘Somalilander’ in Hargeysa will quickly clarify the discursive fixity of that particular political identity! However, Amir’s form of digital cultural production (freed from some of the technical or political constraints of television or radio) employs physical or temporal detachment from the context to speak to Somali audiences across this political spectrum. That people actually listen is indicative both of the ways in which identity is constructed across and through ethnic and political lines in the Somali Horn, and of the influence of novel forms of transnational political commentary and communication on a diverse but self-defined and discursively reproduced ‘Somali’ audience.

Instead of conceiving of these cartoons primarily as a product of the diaspora (and analysing them in terms of the cyber-subjectivity of those external populations) this chapter has conceptualised them as *part of* the media environment on the ground in the Somali Horn of Africa that is itself permeated by cross-cutting transnational dynamics of information sharing and identity creation. In approaching the material from this angle, the chapter has presented the interplay between some of the cartoonist’s favoured tropes, themselves portraying local, regional and global factors affecting state reconfiguration and contestation across Somalia. The complexity of this particular cartoonist’s potential ‘civic agency’ within the public sphere cannot be adequately conceptualised primarily in terms of the ‘resistance’ of the ‘ordinary’ against the ‘official’. Whilst this is in no small part related to the particular conditions of political fragmentation in the Somali Horn, this framing of different types of public sphere agency may have relevance for other zones of conflict and contestation in Africa where transnational media technologies play a role in shaping political imaginations and ideological identifications towards or against the nation-state.

4. Cartoons in conflict: Amin Arts and transnational geopolitical imagination

5. Spies, stonework, and the *suuq*: nationalism and narrative politics in an Islamist Somali public sphere

5.1. Introduction

Harakat Al Shabaab Al Mujaahidiin ('Al Shabaab'¹, hereafter AS) operates as a primary belligerent at war with government and international forces in Somalia. In the terminology of one of these parties, the United Nations, it acts as a 'spoiler' towards multilateral military and political efforts to reconfigure and reconstruct the Somali nation state². This *takfiri jihadi* or militant *salafi*³ Islamist organisation is distinct from the numerous domestic armed actors in Somalia in that it has maintained a broader operational structure (both in terms of territorial presence and operation, as well as relatively diverse clan makeup of senior leadership and ideologues⁴) and has thus been in a position to espouse a distinctive radical narrative of the ongoing conflict in local, national and global terms.

Since 2013, media affiliates of AS have been producing and disseminating online documentary-style videos presenting daily life in areas of south-central Somalia under the militant group's control. In the context of their wider armed struggle waged against foreign occupiers and an 'apostate' Federal Government, these videos feature narratives of nationalist economic self-determination as alternatives to aid dependence and the allegedly nefarious interference of external powers in Somalia. This chapter uses such radical oppositional propaganda material as a vehicle to analyse the 'narrative politics' of Islamism as a component of the wider Somali public sphere of debate over state reconstruction or reconfiguration.

Although AS propaganda is not synonymous with the far broader spectrum of reformist political Islamist thought influential across the Somali territories, it nonetheless overlaps discursively with many popular critiques in the public sphere levelled against elite power-holders. The relevance of ethno-nationalist rhetoric and attacks on clan-ism have been addressed in the previous chapter with

¹ I initially intended to use the acronym HSM for 'Al Shabaab' as it denotes the 'official' and full name of the group (the organisation or its supporters rarely use the moniker 'Al Shabaab' on its own but rather 'The Mujaahidiin' or *Xarakaad Al Shabaab*, the Al Shabaab Movement). Furthermore, the 'ASAS' tag has been used by the group in the past for public (English) communication, such as for Twitter feeds accounts associated with its spokesmen (@HSMpress). However, during the research period many commentators (particularly in English writings) took to using HSM to denote the former president Xasan Sheikh Maxamuud. For clarity I have felt it necessary to switch to the use of AS as shorthand for the militants.

² United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Report 12 July 2013: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2013/413

³ For an overview of *Salafi* or *Wahabi* forms of 'fundamentalist' Sunni Islam and their different political or military manifestations see Wiktorowicz (2006).

⁴ Halgan.net, April 9, 2015: 'Dowladda Federaalka Soomaaliya oo lacag dul dhigtay 11 hogaamiye oo ka tirsan Al-shabaab' [The Federal Government puts money on the head of 11 Al Shabaab leaders]: <http://halgan.net/2015/04/dowladda-federaalka-soomaaliya-oo-lacag-dul-dhigtay-11-hogaamiye-oo-ka-tirsan-al-shabaab/>

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

regard to a transnational political imaginary of a particular cartoonist, and will be explored again in the context of explicitly clan/regional focused media texts in the following chapter. For a (Somali) population characterised by an almost total adherence to Sunni Islam – *across* the political territories in question – this chapter interrogates the narrative politics of a bitter and brutal Islamist insurgency, one which legitimises the killing of other Muslims in the name of a *takfiri-jihad* (Kepel 2006, 31). The chapter analyses the relationship in popular discourse between various tropes of supposed Somali ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious homogeneity, and asks as to how political Islam operationalises Somali nationalism, manages the contradictions of religious struggle in an ethnically-defined religious polity, and attempts to speak to multiple audiences across political boundaries via an inherently transnational public sphere.

Somali-language propaganda of AS affiliates explicitly presents ‘Somali’ ethno-nationalist and religio-cultural discourses, relevant to wider popular local perceptions of the conflict and political reconfiguration across Somalia. While AS may have exhausted its popular political capital due to its battlefield tactics, elements of their conflict-narrative may continue to chime with popular critiques in the wider Somali public sphere against political elites beholden to foreign security agendas, finance and ideology, and the ultimate ‘neo-colonial’ division of the Somali Ummah (*Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*).

Most recent literature on AS communications has focused on its internationalist orientation and its status as regional affiliate of Al Qaeda, often emphasising the role of foreign fighters or the agency of Somali-diaspora recruits either in Somalia itself or in communities in the West (Anzalone 2012; Meleagrou-Hitchens, Maher & Sheehan 2012). While such accounts yield important insight into the transnational dynamics of modern Islamist militancy, much less attention is given to the local narratives of conflict which propelled AS from being one radical splinter of the broader Islamic Courts Union (*Midowga Maxkamadaha Islaamiga*) to the bureaucratic, relatively efficient and cross-clan administration of large parts of southern Somalia between 2006 and 2010.

If AS has, at times, been characterised by a broad ideological divide between factions with an ‘internationalist jihadi’ outlook and those with a more pragmatic ‘nationalist’ worldview, then the discourses of this latter faction require detailed analysis not only for a clearer understanding of the internal dynamics of the AS insurgency but also in regards to the wider role of narratives of Somali ethno-nationalism in ongoing processes of state reconfiguration. While AS’s early ‘nationalist’ legitimacy – forged in their resistance against the (Western-backed) Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in 2006 - has been noted by the relatively few scholars who have critically examined the movement as an administrative entity (Hansen 2013, Marchal 2011), I argue that there remains considerable scope for interrogation of the actual forms of these Somali ethno-nationalist discourses in the wider context of statelessness, political reconfiguration and socio-religious change in Somalia.

The chapter proceeds with a definition of ‘narrative politics’ within the Somali conflict and then introduces particular channels of militant Islamist communication in relation to the wider Somali

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

media ecology. An overview is given of the various conflict dynamics of state contestation across Somalia, into which jihadi actors or narratives assert themselves. The chapter then engages in critical discourse analysis of the specific audio-visual propaganda texts in question. This is followed by a condensed contextualisation of Islamist mobilisation in modern Somali political history and a discussion of wider socio-cultural shifts influencing public religious expression across the post state-collapse environment. The final section reflects on the interplay of narratives of internationalised or regional militancy, with highly localised dynamics of political organisation and mobilisation.

As textual critical discourse analysis is the primary mode of analysis deployed here, a clarification of some of the terminology used below is necessary. Problematic definitions and conceptualisations of cognitive or behavioural ‘radicalism’ have plagued political science and security studies analyses of militant-religious mobilisation and violence (Borum 2011; Neuman 2013). With regard to Islam in particular, critical explorations of the politics of naming or labelling doctrines, sects or movements have highlighted the difficulties of employing terminology not deployed by particular groups themselves (*Salafi/Wahhabi*), or in implicitly endorsing descriptors of militant agency (*jihad/jihadi*) which are rejected by a Muslim mainstream who decry the use of such terminology to justify terrorism or other political violence (Wiktotowicz 2006; Hegghammer 2009). This holds true for the Somali territories where a majority of the population would likely reject AS’s insurgency (or at least the evolution of its ‘terrorist’ tactics). Nevertheless, this does not necessarily preclude certain popular sympathies for elements of Islamist-inspired political agendas and the complexity of the politico-religious discursive playing field is emphasised through the contextualisation of this propaganda material within an explicitly Islamic public sphere. Terms such as ‘jihad’ are included in the discursive analysis in the sense that they are deployed by AS propagandists themselves, while other labels (*salafi, takfiri, wahhabi* etc.) are discussed and problematised in the wider analysis of the contemporary spaces which exist for politico-religious debate.

5.2. Narrative politics and militant Islamist media

In south-central Somalia, where state structures have been absent for a quarter of a century, the re-emergence of governance and the ongoing reconfiguration of the Somali state inevitably involves discursive contestation over political legitimacy and its ideological orientation. This propaganda war continues in a context of extreme political and social fragmentation where very little - in terms of the mechanisms or legitimacy of power - can be taken for granted. AS and affiliated propagandists operate on this battlefield to promote an all-encompassing *lebenswelt*/lifeworld narrative (Habermas 1985) legitimating their armed struggle against the ‘infidels/unbelievers’ (*gaal*) and their ‘apostate stooges’ (*murtad/dabadhilif*). This operates both in terms of the global ‘jihad’ of transnational Islamist militancy and also through vocabularies of Somali nationalism and anti-colonialism, drawing on assumptions of shared cultural, religious and political identity.

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

The pro-AS narrative is just one of numerous different interpretations of processes of state reconfiguration active in the dynamic discursive arena that is the modern Somali public sphere. My focus on the narrative politics (Lucaites & Condit 1985) of insurgency and counter-insurgency emphasises the diverse circuits of political communication which feed into and help construct popular imaginations and understandings of conflict and political change. Demonstrations of strength and intent, and the winning ‘hearts and minds’ are as much priorities for AS as they are for a host of local, regional and international actors including humanitarian organisations, United Nations agencies, African Union forces and domestic political actors. ‘Ordinary’ Somalis, inside the country and in the diaspora engage this narrative politics via ‘social’ and news media, and seek to foreground discourses of ‘Somalia Rising’ or respond creatively⁵ to the violence of AS itself (Hammond 2013). As noted in Chapter 3, even the United States’ Department of Defence has been, until recently, maintaining a Somali-language news website in order to promote certain perspectives (or ‘moderate’ voices) on the reconstruction of the Somali state, clearly indicative of the perceived importance of electronic media in the context of ongoing conflict⁶.

At one end of this ideological spectrum, this chapter engages in depth with three videos from the same media network (Al Furqaan Media), which, although of different lengths, all share numerous stylistic features. The analysis moves between a fine-grained examination of particular elements of the discourses, and an attempt to situate the recurring themes of the material in the broader contexts of both the struggle for the reconfiguration of the Somali state and wider debates in the Somali-language public sphere.

These videos are worthy of attention, I argue, for three reasons. Firstly, this type of material has received little prior scholarly attention in the Somali context in comparison to ‘official’ AS media focusing on the battlefield itself. Secondly, this particular producer (Al Furqaan) continues to release slick propaganda material that directly relates to dynamic battlefield developments in southern Somalia – indeed, their most recent video was released in December 2015 and purported to show the town of Janaale ‘recovering’ in the aftermath of its recapture by AS from African Union forces⁷. Finally - and while this lies beyond the scope of this chapter – there is significant analytical scope for the comparison of this material with other ‘positive’ jihadi propaganda from other contexts, particularly the media savvy militants of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, whose huge output on the alleged social benefits of Islamist state-building goes far beyond the gruesome execution or battlefield themes they are most commonly associated with.

⁵ Guardian newspaper, 22 January 2016, ‘Defiant Somalis condemn Al Shabaab beach attack’: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/22/somalia-lido-beach-mogadishu-tweetlidopictures-alshabaab>

⁶ Somali language Sabahi Online was run by the US Department of Defence (AFRICOM/Special Operations Command): <https://fcw.com/articles/2015/02/13/african-web-sites.aspx>

⁷ Al Furqaan Media, 22 December 2015 ‘Soo Kabashada Janaale’[The recovery of Janaale], <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQt0hzU6Ku8>

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

Media products promoting the AS agenda can be divided into two broad and potentially overlapping categories: ‘official’ AS communication epitomised by the organisation’s Al Kataib media unit; and the material produced by various affiliated networks such as Al Furqaan Radio/Media, or websites such as Somalimemo.com or Calamada.com. Differentiating between affiliation and ownership with/by AS is rarely straightforward in the fluid battlefield and media environment, and Radio Al Furqaan’s headquarters has since 2010 shifted from one AS-controlled location to the next as the group has lost control of various urban strongholds. While this is indicative of the fact that Al Furqaan is a ‘Shabaab station’, it nevertheless bills itself as an ‘independent’ media network, and this influences the type and tone of the propaganda it releases.

Al Kataib’s ‘official’ AS output is largely in Arabic or English and focuses mainly on the on the ongoing conflict itself, the role of fighters and the various operations carried out in the name of AS’s campaign both in Somalia and in neighbouring countries such as Kenya. This material appears to primarily target audiences in the Arabic speaking world and in the West, and seeks to either promote AS as a credible and effective transnational jihadi actor (as Al Qaeda’s affiliate in East Africa⁸) or as a vehicle to directly address Governments to both threaten attacks and attract potential foreign fighters (whether of Somali ethnic origin or not) to their struggle in East Africa⁹. Capable cameramen are evidently embedded in AS units for certain high-profile attacks and the (edited, captioned and often highly graphic) material they produce is picked up not only by pro-jihadi websites but also finds its way into more ‘mainstream’ Somali news media as documentation of ongoing conflict¹⁰.

The media production of Al Furqaan, on the other hand, tends to be released exclusively in Somali and, whilst referencing the ongoing conflict, focuses more on the alleged economic, social, political and developmental benefits of AS rule through their implementation of strict Islamic Law (Shariah). The videos analysed in this paper are taken from a much wider Al Furqaan output, and have all been distributed electronically, primarily through the Youtube platform. As the videos only reference the conflict indirectly they have so far escaped Youtube censors who typically remove other more explicitly violent jihadi material. The four videos analysed in this paper had (as of January 2016) a combined total of around 97,000 views. Whilst this figure – in terms of global ‘viral’ online video – is hardly staggering, it does indicate that a Somali speaking audience exists for the material and these figures do not include direct viewing through other websites.

⁸ Somalia Newsroom 3 December 2015: <http://somalianewsroom.com/2015/03/12/will-al-shabaab-follow-boko-haram-and-pledge-loyalty-to-isis/>

⁹ CNN, 21 February 2015 ‘Al Shabaab threatens Malls, some in US’: <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/02/21/us/al-shabaab-calls-for-mall-attacks/>

¹⁰ Caasimadda.com, 1 July 2015, ‘*Daawo sawirada Al Shabaab oo soo bandhigay meydadka askarii Burundi ee lagu dilay Leego*’ [See Al Shabaab published pictures of corpses of Burundian soliders killed at Leego] <http://caasimadda.com/daawo-sawirada-alshabaab-oo-soo-bandhigay-meydadka-askarii-burundi-ee-lagu-dilay-leego/> (Graphic images)

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

Attempting to identify the target or actual audience of such material is a difficult task for the researcher. Obviously, this material is aimed at a Somali-speaking audience located in Somalia, in the Somali-speaking territories of the Horn, or in wider diaspora communities. This paper assumes that the audience in Somalia is primarily situated in urban areas where internet access is relatively fast and affordable, and is also relatively youthful, based on the tone of the material and the apparently young age of many of the journalists. Whilst it is clear that the content has been filmed on the ground in south-central Somalia it is possible that post-production may have been undertaken outside of Somalia, as in other contexts of jihadi media production¹¹. Regardless of the potentially transnational character of this media production and consumption (true of online Somali news media in general), it is clear that the material is engaging with a particular narrative of life and conflict on the ground in Somalia. Important for this analysis is the way in which these ‘locally’ produced and consumed texts present the interplay between meta-narratives of global or transnational militant Islamist struggle and micro-level religious or cultural politics of everyday life in south central Somalia.

5.3. The strategic environment for AS militancy

Although AS has seemed to have been on the back foot since 2010/11 with the loss of territory it controlled in Muqdisho (and then from 2012 with the progressive fall of towns from Kismaayo and Baraawe on the coast, through to inland urban footholds in Gedo and Bay regions in 2015) it still retains an amorphous presence in the south-central hinterlands, frequently demonstrating the capacity to move back into previously ‘liberated’ areas as SFG and AMISOM forces move on. This fluidity means that maps of military/political control of south-central Somali - however up to date - invariably fail to capture the complexity of the reality on the ground and the situation is often better conceptualised as a shifting patchwork of force movement and nominal control from various actors. These include SFG or SFG-aligned military units; the forces of embryonic regional administrations (such as the Interim Jubaland Administration or the Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jamaac forces); local clan-based militias (where these are actually distinguishable from the previous two types of actors); AMISOM contingents who vary in terms of regional zones of operation, capacity and interests; and AS itself.

The targeted killing by US drone strike of AS leader Axmed Cabdi Godane (*nom de guerre* Mukhtar Abu Zubeyr) in September 2014 was anticipated from some quarters to accelerate the further degradation of the organisation. The group had been beset by worsening internal divisions between various factions loosely representing nationalist versus ‘internationalist’ strategic priorities, foreign/local fighter contestation, and groups or individuals disenchanted with the centralisation of control by Godane - itself bringing criticism from senior Al Qaeda figures to which the group had formally affiliated with from 2012 (Bryden 2014). Although these schisms culminated in the violent

¹¹ Vice News 1 July 2015 ‘My Journey Inside the Islamic State’ on the location of media producers in the Iraq/Syria context: <https://news.vice.com/article/my-journey-inside-the-islamic-state>

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

deaths of several high profile figures, from the young American jihadi Omar Shafik Hammami (*nom de guerre* Abu Mansur Al Amriki) to the veteran Somali Islamist and one-time close associate of Godane, Ibraahim Xaaji Jaamac Meecaad 'Al Afghani', AS nonetheless retained a capacity for mounting 'complex' attacks on a variety of governmental, military and civilian targets in Muqdisho. Recently, AS's military tactics have moved beyond asymmetrical harrying of AMISOM forces to direct engagement with selected outposts. Routs of Burundian and Kenyan bases in June 2015 and January 2016 provided a wealth of official propaganda material for the group.

The momentum of AMISOM/SFG advances against AS and their ability to effectively hold captured territory are influenced by wider political turbulence (such as the turnover of three Prime Ministers in two years since 2012) and difficulties of reconfiguring regional control along federal lines (Mosley 2015). Here one must recognise the varying degrees of consolidation of administrations established for 'Jubaland' centred around Kismaayo, the 'Southwest State' around Baydhabo, and the more recent intrigues and conflict involved in getting a 'Central State' in Galgaduud and Mudug off the ground. This overview of the political/military situation highlights the peculiar and messy reality of power on the ground in south-central Somalia, where political reconfiguration continues *alongside* both insurgency/counterinsurgency in areas nominally controlled by SFG/AMISOM forces, and the advances of these military assets into areas still under the black flag of AS.

AS also maintains a territorial and operational structure in Puntland, waging war against the state authorities and their international backers - ranging from US Special Forces in the Galgala Hills to UN staff in Garoowe. AS's Puntland operations are conditioned by both highly localised *and* international dynamics. That its territorial centre of gravity lies in the mountains straddling the region of Sanaag and the port city of Bosaaso owes much to the marginalisation of the Warsangeli sub-clan; struggling for autonomy and advantage between the various political and clan-based structures of the Puntland and Somaliland states (Hoehne 2014). At the same time, a recent political-ideological split has occurred within the wider 'national' AS organisation, with a particular Puntland-based ideologue switching his faction's allegiance away from Al Qaeda to the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria¹².

In Somaliland, while AS maintains a covert presence, its operations against state interests have been minimal since 2008 when it attacked the Ethiopian Consulate, the UNDP headquarters and the Presidential residence. The relative lack of violent AS activity in Somaliland, combined with the fact that several high-profile AS leaders (including the late Emir Godane) hail from the region, fuels conspiracy theories, and (in Puntland) periodic official allegations that the administration in Hargeysa either directly supports or provides safe haven to AS operatives in order to destabilise southern or northeastern Somalia. An apparently bogus account of the 'nexus between Somaliland and Al

¹² Jubbaland Media.com October 22, 2015 'Garabka kooxda Al Shabaab ee Galgala oo sheegay inay ku biireen ISIS' [Al Shabaab faction in Galgala announces that they have joined ISIS]: <http://jubbalandmedia.com/2015/10/garabka-kooxda-al-shababa-ee-galgala-oo-sheegay-inay-ku-biireen-isis/>

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

Shabaab' appeared in February 2016 on the Kenyamedia.net news blog (since taken down). This account by the (fictional) 'Swedish investigative journalists Peter Wolfson & Greta Backstrom' was both reproduced and debunked across Somali cyberspace, and is indicative of the lengths to which parties will go to influence the narrative around Somaliland's relationship with AS and, by extension, the wider Somali territories¹³.

While AS exists as one of multiple military-political actors active in the arena of state-contestation in Somalia, it nevertheless occupies a distinctive position within the Somali political imaginary. AS sits, in popular media discourse, at once outside of state institutions while simultaneously playing an integral and covert role between the strategic manoeuvres of these various 'state' power holders. The spectre of its necessarily transnational, labyrinthine and clandestine operational networks lends itself to conspiracy theorisation in a public sphere characterised by intense mistrust¹⁴. The Puntland Minister of Security, Cabdi Xirsi Qarjab, recently accused the SFG in Muqdisho of facilitating an AS troop movement along the coast north into Puntland-controlled Mudug as a move designed to destabilise his territory. This, he alleged, was due to Puntland's opposition to the 4.5 (clan) system of MP selection being pushed by the Muqdisho-based government¹⁵. While AS retains its own distinctive narrative of the wider Somali conflict, it in itself constantly invoked, in almost spectralized form, by various state political actors to illustrate issues of insecurity (which can be blamed on competing administrations) or outlines of macro-political conspiracy.

5.4. Spies, stonework and the suuq – AS documentary propaganda

The videos uploaded by Al Furqaan onto their Youtube channel from late 2013 were focused primarily on daily life and 'development' in areas still under the control of AS. The videos' locations (Ceel Buur in Galgaduud Region, Baraawe and Buulo Mareer in Lower Shabelle Region) were all captured by AMISOM/SFG forces in 2014, while Lower Juba remains largely under AS control at the time of writing. In each case, and characteristic of AS's battlefield tactics, the towns were ceded to the advancing forces without significant urban resistance. AS forces melted away into the hinterland to harry the occupying forces and disrupt supply lines both for the new occupiers and the remaining civilian populations. Foreseeing losses of territory that year may have spurred AS and affiliated media organisations to produce this wave of material to serve as propaganda for their period of

¹³ Sola, February 17, 2016, 'Wada shaqeynta Somaliland iyo Al Shabaab ee la yiri waxaa soo qoray wariyaal Swedish ah maxaa ka jira? SOLA investigates' [Cooperation between Somaliland and AlShabaab said to be written by Swedish journalists – what's it all about? SOLA investigates] <http://solaportal.com/Archive/2016/2/56solaportal>

¹⁴ IGAD's 2016 report on AS as a 'transnational security threat' provides fascinating intelligence-derived detail about the organisation's networks, as well as the movements and communications of individual operatives. Whilst the report emphasises the trans-state activities and development of the group, the continued importance of cross-border ethnic Somali networks is clear from the in-depth case studies included.

¹⁵ Horn Cable TV, March 15, 2016, 'Puntland Oo Xukuumada Somaliya Ku Eedaysay Galitaanka Alshabab Gudaha Puntland' [Puntland accuses the Government of Somalia over the Al Shabaab incursion inside Puntland] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1fpzutR2Ew>

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

administration. This would invite comparisons between the economic or humanitarian conditions of these towns before and after the SFG takeovers; conditions which would be inevitably worsened by the ongoing conflict, AS's tactic of economic blockade, and the SFG's inability to extend the provision of basic services to local populations in the wake of its territorial advances.

On the surface, Al Furqaan's film '*Qaabka loo sameeyo burjikada Ceelbuur*' ('How the stone stoves of Ceel Buur are made') is a mundane 11 minute documentary about traditional stone work and trade in this town in Galgaduud in central Somalia¹⁶. However, read in the context of AS narratives engaging tropes of Islamic and Somali ethno-nationalist identity, the video serves as a sophisticated piece of propaganda designed to frame the Somali state (and battles for it) in a way that glorifies and empowers AS militancy and governance. The video begins (like all of those analysed here) with Arabic script and a voiceover announcing 'In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, Most Merciful'. This is followed by the Somali (latin script) name of Al Furqaan Broadcasting, their website emerging in explosive graphics: sparks and flames evoking divine or supernatural power. The film opens with panoramic shots of the town at sunrise and the male voiceover, strong-voiced but calm and measured in tone, speaking clearly to his audience, begins by describing the town's long history in the central regions of Somalia. He emphasises that it was previously invaded by Ethiopian Forces, although the population remained. The inclusion of a caption naming the journalist is important and characteristic of all these films in that it attempts to present an image to the viewer of an independent media organisation providing objective reportage from areas under the control of AS, and distinguishes such products from the official communications of AS itself.

The introduction continues with another description of Ceel Buur as an ancient town blessed with natural resources; famous in Somalia and abroad for the stone stoves (*burjiko*) that are produced there. Going in search of those with the skills to make these stoves, the journalist (never pictured in the film) then interviews a craftsman who discusses the security situation under the area control of the '*Mujaahidiin*' (he gives a positive assessment, of course) and talks about his tools and process of work. This is followed by various shots of the excavation of the stone and a continuous description of the process and the various people involved is given. The journalist maintains the didactic tone of an educator, instructing viewers on a traditional handicraft.

Another interview with a different carver reveals perspectives on the geographic location and directions of the trade, themselves of political significance. Discussing the export of the stoves, the craftsman states that they are taken to places in 'this land' (*dhulkan*) such as 'Somaliland, Puntland, Djibouti, Zone 5, and then also Ethiopia and across the sea'. Here the administrations inside what is formally recognised as 'Somalia' - the secessionist Somaliland and the autonomous but non-secessionist Puntland - are imagined as part of the Somali territory, but so too is the nation state of Djibouti and Zone 5 (the administrative name for Ethiopia's ethnically Somali-dominated territory,

¹⁶ Al Furqaan March 2014 '*Qaabka loo sameeyo burjikada Ceelbuur*':
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=myCwuND-ksQ>

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

sometimes known by the name deriving from the predominant clan there, the Ogaden). The carver's subsequent addition of 'Ethiopia' and his manner of speaking then situates it as a different or separate place.

Regardless of whether or not the interviewee was coached or coerced into this manner of speech (perhaps unlikely given the relatively natural way goes about answering the rather mundane questions), this ordering of the geography of the Somali lands is significant in that it correlates with the historical notion of the 'Greater Somalia' divided up by the colonialists and packaged of to hostile non-Somali neighbours such as Ethiopia (Barnes 2007; Kusow 2004). This idea, integral to the identity of the post-colonial Somali state – from the symbolic five points of the star on the Somali flag representing the five 'Somali' territories of the Horn, to the war fought against Ethiopia in 1977 for control of one of those territories – has been rebooted in the rise of Islamist political and military agitation, emphasising the religious solidarity of the *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed* on top of ethnic, linguistic or cultural linkage between the territories. The words of this stone carver sitting under the tree in Ceel Buur constitute either a subtly crafted piece of political propaganda, or simply represent wider popular perceptions of the geographical status of Somali territories within a politically divided Horn. That the administrations of Somaliland or Puntland are discursively equated with the political arrangements of Djibouti or Zone 5 in Ethiopia, is of significance for the way in which Somali 'states' are imagined and reproduced, and the types of rhetoric and agency which are fashioned around them.

Fig. 5.1



Screenshot from 'How the stone stoves of Ceel Buur are made' (Al Furqaan Media): the craftsman interviewee.

The video concludes with footage of the craftsmen and traders preparing and coming together for the Maqrib (sunset) prayer. The narrator intones that the people of Ceel Buur have found peace with implementation of the Shariah and that as producers and tradesmen they come together to pray in the same place. The imagery is that of a rural, productive and religious idyll situated firmly in a context of 'traditional' and 'Somali' economic activity.

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

Al Furqaan's more substantial documentary *'Bulsho horumartay hagar daamadii hey'adaha kadib'* ('Development of the society after the deception of the agencies')¹⁷ presents a critique of humanitarian actors in relation to Somali economic self-sufficiency and food security. Uploaded onto Youtube in December 2013, the film opens by introducing its location (Jamaame and Kamsuuma districts in Lower Juba region) and individuals (such as community spokesmen) who will be interviewed by the Al Furqaan journalist. That the journalist is presented as an outsider implies an objectivity in this reporting by an 'independent' news agency. The 'ease' of the journey is emphasised, a factor intended to resonate with people in different parts of south-central Somalia where movement between districts is hampered by the ubiquitous checkpoints of Government (SFG) forces, pro-SFG and/or clan-based local militias, and AS itself.

The film situates its narrative of 'development' in the Juba regions in the context of a wider conflict being fought over Somalia and its resources. The narrator (over footage of AMISOM troops arriving in Muqdisho) describes how the 'invasion' of Somalia has been ongoing for a long time and is a 'multifaceted' campaign. One of these 'faces' relates to control of agricultural production and the impoverishment of Somalis, which itself leads to the dangerous emigration (*tahriib*) of Somalis to Europe or dependence on handouts from the forces which have taken control of the country. The 'colonial' campaign is described as involving 'warfare of the mind'; psychological tactics to promote the image of poverty in a country that is actually rich in natural resources.

This sequence features footage of communications equipment and meetings chaired by white men in suits - actually the UN Special Representative for Somalia, although the imagery implies military intelligence and planning¹⁸. The visual linkage between communications technology and espionage is significant in the wider context of jihadi media in Somalia. Narratives referencing Western surveillance, Wikileaks' revelations, and the hacking of electronic communications are commonly deployed, particularly in discussions of drone strikes and the use by foreign intelligence agencies of locals as spies. This, along with moral injunctions against young peoples' time-wasting online (the irony of AS's electronic jihad notwithstanding) has served as justification for sporadic banning of mobile internet, and the public execution of alleged spies is a common and publicised occurrence in towns under the group's control.

The narrator contextualises the film's subsequent content by declaring that although the 'the white or black unbeliever' has succeeded in these objectives in the areas they have captured, there remain other parts of the country under the control of the Islamic administration of AS that are 'free' and in which agricultural production can flourish. Administrative governance is equated with rule by Islamic law as a means to arbitrate impartially in clan-based disputes, the result of which – as

¹⁷ Al Furqaan, December 2013 *'Bulsho horumartay hagar daamadii hey'adaha kadib'*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wblzUXC04I>

¹⁸ Official ASAS decree on 'stopping of mobile internet and fibre-optic services' 8 January 2014: *Bayaan ku aadan joojinta adeegyada Mobile Internet & Fibre Optic*, soft copy in writer's possession.

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

emphasised in this particular video – is the improvement of security in the region. The benefits of security (resolution of conflicts through the implementation of Islamic law and the removal of obstacles to movement such as checkpoints and extortion from pro-government or SFG militias) are frequently cited by subsequent interviewees in the film as the primary reason that agricultural production and trade has flourished under AS rule.

The film progresses through different locations- from the fields to the market (*suuq*) where an idealised image of bountiful domestic production in conditions of peace, security and religious observance is presented. From early on, the position of international humanitarian ‘agencies’ is implied and then linked with the wider narrative of foreign espionage and the invasion of Somalia. The title of the film plays on the ambiguity of the term ‘agencies’ (which exists in both Somali and English) and blurs the distinctions between ‘humanitarian’, ‘security’ or ‘intelligence’ to the point where the viewer is meant to believe these are one in the same. The implication here is that humanitarian agencies form a part of the grand neo-colonial structure of regional and Western military powers (the former such as historic Christian enemies such as Ethiopia and Kenya being utilised by the latter, dominated by the United States) who are backing an ‘apostate’ or ‘stooge’ government in Muqdisho in an effort to de-Islamise, depopulate and then exploit Somalia. Aid itself is portrayed as weapon which promotes dependence and a mindset of poverty which enslaves its victims or drives them out of Somalia.

As the film progresses this narrative is reinforced with more specific charges levelled against these foreign agendas. Firstly, the actions of the AS administration to reinforce flood barriers on the Juba River to prevent flooding are compared to the lack of such measures in Government-controlled areas where, theoretically, international humanitarian actors are able to operate. Infrastructure development by the administration, such as road building/repair and irrigation, is emphasised with the implication that such work to benefit the potential self-sufficiency of Somali production is not a priority for the ‘agencies’.

The action then moves again to the *suuq* where the narrator describes his conversations with traders who tell him that local agricultural production has increased since the banning by AS of the World Food Program (the only agency specifically mentioned in the film) which was importing food aid. Here the emphasis is on the production of local foodstuffs such as sorghum, maize, sesame and beans, in contrast to imported staples of rice and pasta which are prevalent and popular across Somalia. One trader describes how food aid ‘broke’ the market for local produce and once again the narrative of manufactured dependence on imports is reinforced. Footage of busy markets where men and women buy and sell fruit and vegetables exemplifies not only an idea of prosperity but of healthy-living based on local produce. Here interviewees extol the virtues of local fruit juice over the imported soft drinks which are full of ‘chemicals’. These are discourses of ‘local’ or ‘organic’ food production - familiar to bourgeois consumers in the west - but situated in a narrative pitting dependence against religiously-framed economic nationalism.

Fig. 5.2



Screenshot from 'Development of society' (Al Fuqaan Media): the juice-drinking interviewee.

Humanitarian action (or the wider humanitarian situation of Somalia) is a recurring theme in other Al Furqaan videos where references are frequently made to the dignity and self-sufficiency of the Somali Ummah and contrasting indignities of aid dependence. The January 2014 Al Furqaan film *'Mashruuca afurinta dadka sooman'* ('Project for the people breaking the fast') ostensibly portrays AS in the town of Baraawe providing rations to poor residents to enable them to break the fast during the holy month of Ramadan¹⁹. This video highlights discourses around the micro-politics of aid delivery relevant across Somalia, particularly in relation to vulnerable or disadvantaged communities. The humanitarian problems facing Somalia are presented in the introduction as a product of civil unrest and the ongoing conflict, while the Islamic administration undertakes ceaseless humanitarian activities in the areas it controls to mitigate the suffering caused. The video goes on to present a distribution of basic foodstuffs to men and women (queuing separately) in a courtyard, and the project itself is described as being a collaboration between the Islamic administration and wealthy locals.

The narrator goes into detail about the setting of the distribution: the place is very 'clean' and the people are 'well organised'; there is no violence or pointing of guns as would be found in the places (of aid distribution) controlled by the government or regional administration; men and women are separated, as is stipulated by religion, and everyone is sitting down 'nicely'. The narrator notes that before the distribution starts, it is common for the people to be addressed and the film then depicts the *Wali* (AS governor) of the Lower Juba region visiting and inspecting the site. This is followed by interviews with the recipients, male and female, who talk about the quality of the goods distributed (emphasis on the fresh meat) and the dignified manner in which it is conducted - one respondent compares it favourably with those distributions conducted by the 'infidels'. The film concludes with a description of the end of the distribution, clearly emphasising not only the calm

¹⁹ Al Furqaan, January 2014, *'Mashruuca afurinta dadka sooman'* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paE-F46oO6k>

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

organisation of the event but also clear ideas of public piety and gender segregation: ‘After the distribution, the people begin to leave in an orderly fashion. The women go first, the men wait and are not intermingled with them’.

These portrayals of aid and nationalistic self-sufficiency ‘work’ by reproducing the security narrative of AS control over territory in Somalia. Whilst AS has lost both urban territory and a significant degree of public support - in part due to its targeted killings of civilians associated with the SFG and collateral civilian casualties in its large scale attacks - it is nevertheless important to recall that initial territorial and administrative gains made by the group were founded on the premise of security and impartial governance by Shariah. It is this narrative which is being re-engaged in the propaganda material here: AS rule means economic opportunity (especially in regard to what are presented as quintessentially ‘Somali’ economic activities), ‘dignified’ and religiously-sanctioned charity, and freedom from the abuses committed by SFG-aligned or AMISOM forces.

5.5. Islamist mobilisation and socio-religious change in Somalia

In order to understand the form and potential appeal of AS conflict-narratives it is necessary to examine the history of political Islamist mobilisation in Somalia and processes of socio-cultural or religious change which have characterised the post-1991 era. This section draws on the historical record as well as current interventions into ‘mainstream’ public sphere debate on religious change, expression and contestation.

Modern Somali Islamism can primarily be traced to the emergence of groups such as Al Ittixaad Al Islaam, mobilised in opposition to the confrontational secularism of Siyaad Barre’s military regime through the 1970s and 1980s. Coinciding with increased global expression of political Islamist agency, the growing influence of *Salafi* or *Wahabi* inspired Sunni doctrines (Adam 2010; Mire Aadam 2013), and Somali economic migration to the Gulf States, the development of anti-regime Islamist organisation would come to play a political and social role in the aftermath of state collapse in 1991.

Although the fall of Barre’s regime was brought about by the operations of regional clan-based militias through the 1980s (including the Somali National Movement in what would become Somaliland; the Somali Salvation Democratic Front in what is now Puntland, and the United Somali Congress who took Muqdisho from the central regions and swept through the south), Islamist mobilisation and rhetoric remained an undercurrent within attempts to pull the country out of the conflict that followed state collapse in 1991. The extent to which Islamist organisations such as Al Ittixaad were active and internationally-linked during this period is debatable, although modern jihadis are often eager to link themselves with this historical context - for example, in regard to the

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

murder of the Bishop of Muqdisho, or the infamous *Black Hawk Down* incident during the United States' and United Nations' early engagement with post-state collapse Somalia²⁰.

Space precludes a full overview of the complex historical development of the regionally divided Somali Islamist movements during the chaotic period of 1990s' 'warlord' politics. However, it is necessary to reference certain important milestones including the confrontation between Al Ittixaad and the SSDF in the northeast leading to their expulsion from the strategic port city of Bosaaso in 1992, and their subsequent entrenchment in the south in Gedo region, eventually prompting Ethiopian military incursions from 1996 (De Waal 2004, 128). Meanwhile, a stateless and divided Muqdisho experienced different stages of Islamist judicial development, eventually culminating in the emergence of the Midowga Maxkamadaha Islaamiga (Union of Islamic Courts) that would expand its authority into larger areas of southern Somalia before its overthrow in the Ethiopian invasion of 2006 (Barnes & Hassan 2007, Mwangi 2010). It was from this point that AS, hitherto an armed radical faction of the broader Courts movement, asserted itself as the primary resistor against what was portrayed as brutal Ethiopian aggression. It would subsequently come to establish itself as an administrative body across the majority of the southern Somali regions during what Hansen (2013) describes as its 'Golden Age' of governance and territorial control around 2009/2010.

These different periods of Islamist mobilisation and administrative development in the post 1991-era corresponded with, and conditioned, wider trends of socio-religious change visible particularly in urban Somalia. Increased emphasis on public piety, orthodox critiques of 'traditional' socio-religious practices and a visible trend of cultural orientation towards the Arab world are all apparent features of religious expression in modern Somali urban communities (Tiilikainen 2010). The popular conception that 'most Somalis are Sufis'²¹ and are thus likely to automatically reject or resist the governance or judicial practices of a salafi-influenced Sunni administration is an oversimplification of a socio-religious context which has changed enormously in the decades following state-collapse. Insecurity has created conditions where the perceived impartial and firm implementation of Shariah has, at times, been welcomed as a remedy by different social groups who make careful calculations of the tradeoffs between individual liberty and the security gains of Islamist rule.

This is not to say that religio-political contestation along salafi/sufi lines does not exist. The militant 'sufi' agency of the Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jamaac against AS in may be expressed in these terms,

²⁰ Somalimemo.net, 1 June 2015, '*Sheekh Xasan Turki oo Masuul Ka Ahaa Dilkii Baadri Salvatore Colombo Loogu Geystay Magaalada Muqdisho*' [Sheikh Xasan Turki was responsible for the killing of Father Salvador Colombo in Muqdisho]: <http://somalimemo.net/articles/2931/Sheekh-Xasan-Turki-oo-Masuul-Ka-ahaa-Dilkii-Baadri-Salvador-Colombo-Loogu-Geystay-Magaalada-Muqdisho>

²¹ The Guardian newspaper, 2 April 2015 'Al-Shabaab: from al-Qaida rejects to a fighting force of thousands': <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/02/al-shabaab-from-al-qaida-rejects-to-a-fighting-force-of-thousands>

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

although the extent to which this constitutes a purely ideological contest as opposed to completing clan interests in the Central Regions is beyond the scope of this paper (Hesse 2010). However, in the wider discursive battlefield, popular debates seem to have largely shifted beyond what constitute ‘traditional’ or ‘Somali’ forms of Islam. While I highlight below two notable exceptions to (or criticisms of) this trend in ‘mainstream’ Somali media, the AS propaganda I explore makes no mention of competing interpretations of Islam (whether ‘traditional’, ‘Somali’ or otherwise). It focuses instead on clear distinctions between a Sunni *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed* and those who are ‘apostate’ by their association with a government that cooperates with the infidels. This formulation by omission is in itself a highly political act - essentially erasing debate on alternative conceptions of appropriate religious practice in the Somali context - and yet this type of framing of the religious/ideological field is characteristic not just of AS propaganda but also other discussions playing out in the Somali public sphere.

Opportunities for public religious debate have been greatly constricted not only by the threat of AS retaliations but also wider patterns of increased doctrinal orthodoxy and social conservatism evident in urban centres across Somalia. This was a recurring theme of interviews I conducted with Somali professionals (in media, education and humanitarian fields) in Muqdisho. Even in cyberspace, where there is potential for anonymity and physical detachment from a conflict environment, direct religious debate is often muted. In a (rare) critique in the Somali public sphere of doctrinal orthodoxy or the restrictions of religious debate, Muqdisho-based writer Bashir M. Xersi’s opinion piece ‘*Wadaaddadii Soomaaliyeed ma UMAL ayaa ka haray?!*’ (‘Of the Somali clerics is it only Umal who is left?!’) represents direct engagement by a local (named) commentator with a particular religious controversy ongoing in 2014²².

Xersi discusses the furore over the publication of Somali Islamic scholar Cabdisaciid Cabdi Ismaciil’s book ‘*Xadka Riddadka maxaa ka run ah?*’ (What is true regarding the ruling on apostasy?). Here he refers to the accusations by prominent conservative clerics (such as the eponymous Sheekh Umal, based, like Ismaciil, in Nairobi) that the text represents a distortion of Islam and a conspiracy by those seeking to undermine the faith. This is a religious question of fundamental importance to the Somali conflict, where the killing of fellow Muslims is often justified in takfiri doctrine by victims’ alleged ‘apostasy’, self-defined by actors such as AS in the political terms of an individual’s affiliation with state authorities.

Xersi contextualises current controversy in terms of a past, idealised role of clerics (pl. *Wadaaddo*) in Somali society, whose function, he argues, was characterised by service to the community and a detachment from politics. He criticises other contemporary Somali religious

²² (Blog post, reproduced – initially – across several news websites. Currently available here: <https://bilediraac.wordpress.com/2014/10/03/wadaaddadii-soomaaliyeed-ma-umal-ayaa-ka-haray/> ; For Sheekh Umal’s condemnation of the book in question see Youtube, Salaf Media September 20, 2014: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPh8eIM7srg>

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

scholars for their immediate intervention in the debate, and points out that in his first address on the subject the Sheekh in question admitted that he had not yet read the entire book. The writer peppers his argument with numerous Somali proverbs and lines from the poetic canon, as epitomised by the independence-era *Abwaan* (poet) Cabdullaahi Suldaan Timacadde. In doing so he shifts the debate towards the role of religion in (specifically) ‘Somali’ society. Encouraging Somali-language deliberation of Islam, he notes that *‘Buug walba oo af Soomaali ku qoran, wuxuu kayd u noqon karaa eray lumi lahaa oo afka ka mid ah’* (‘Every book written in Somali can become a store of words of the language that would otherwise be lost’). For the writer, Islam in Somali culture has been stripped of ‘meaning’ in the sense that debate in people’s vernacular is so frequently constricted, due both to a lack of Somali language materials or through doctrinal intolerance and violence.

Highlighting the contemporary relevance of the issue, he asserts that the ideology of ‘Al Shabaab’ is shared by many other important and active contemporary religious groups: *‘AL ITIXAAD iyo AL ICTISAAM (WAHAABIYA), walina umadda ayey ka dhex qalaadaan, oo maalin walba war saxaafadeed habaabin iyo hilin ka weecin ah u soo saaraan’*. (‘Al Itixaad and Al Ictisaam [Wahaabi], who remain in society, every day misleading people through the press releases they give’[writer’s emphasis]). Here the issue is presented as transcending AS itself, relating instead to a wider ‘cultural’ malaise and the changing forms of ‘Somali’ Islamic social and political expression. This piece is striking for its forthrightness, and whilst rare in terms of its explicit critique, it overlaps with tensions expressed elsewhere in public sphere regarding appropriate ‘Somali’ linguistic and cultural identity in the post-state collapse (and state reconstruction) context.

In terms of the media battlefield in which these debates play out, it is notable that Ismaciil’s controversial book was promoted by a ‘news’ outlet such as (the now defunct) Sabahi Online, operated by the US Department of Defence to counter AS propaganda²³. Given popular perceptions that the site was a mere ‘CIA’ mouthpiece, it is perhaps unsurprising how conspiracy narratives of external threats to Islam can be constructed by public sphere figures such as Sheekh Umal. As for the writer of the opinion piece discussed here, while I was in contact with him via email he declined to comment further or meet me in person in Muqdisho: a reluctance fully understandable in this public sphere environment of violence and suspicion towards foreign motives.

In another written intervention into public sphere debates over Islam, ‘Somali culture’ and transnational influences, diaspora-based writer Xaashi Yassiin Cismaan’s online editorial *‘Waa wareeey!!’* (A call for help), points to elements of diaspora life which are feeding back into religious conflict in Somalia²⁴. Here he argues that such factors even more damaging than clanism (his depiction of this latter phenomenon is discussed in the subsequent chapter). In lamenting a new

²³ While *Sabahi online* no longer exists, a copy of their interview with the book’s writer can be found here [English]: ‘Death penalty for apostasy not justifiable in Islam: Somali scholar’ October 30, 2014 <http://www.kasmaal.com/?p=795>

²⁴ Xaashi Yassiin Cismaan, December 2013 ‘Waa wareeey!!’ [A call for help] <http://www.raxanreeb.com/2013/12/waa-wareeeyey-wq-xaashi-yaasiin-cismaan>

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

generation's loss of 'Somali' cultural values and language, he argues that religion (Islam) should not be seen as a form of collective identity but should only be conceived of as personal faith (*'Diintu maahan hayb ee waa caqiido'*). Here he implies that the youth (located in a transnational sense in both in the diaspora and in Somalia) may be orientating themselves more towards religion as a marker of identity than with 'Somali culture', however that may be defined.

The writer employs the couplet of *'isgaalaysiin'* and *'isqarxin'* to describe the acts of losing one's faith, and suicide bombing as opposite evils. He argues that these both stem from foreign ideologies and influences, either secular or religious. This is presented as the dilemma for 'Somali' Islam, and he appeals to clerics to transcend disputes between salafi and sufi interpretations of the faith and promote tolerance. As noted above, this type of explicit comment on doctrinal divides and contestation is uncommon in the Somali public sphere, where religious rhetoric – couched within appeals to Somali nationalism - tends to take a less explicit form; usually emphasising a straightforward unity of Islam or the pervasiveness of external influence. The writer asserts that these twin problems of infidelity or extremism have not simply 'fallen from the sky', but rather work alongside the dynamics of clan-ism that he also describes. Delving further into doctrinal divides, he draws a historical parallel with the European experience of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) and violence that unleashed between Protestants and Catholics. Whilst he does not push the comparison further he concludes by noting that Europe today is at peace and religious coexistence is the norm.

In discussing the complexities of Islam and social change in Somalia one must remember that this is a context where various political Islamist factions (themselves often the products of the same educational, and socialisation processes which influenced the emergence of AS) are on the ascendancy in government and represent the future of Somalia as a Sunni Islamic state. Sharif (2015) discusses the understudied role of Sudanese Islamic higher education in training and socialising a generation of cadres who played a crucial role in the Union of Islamic Courts project. My own professional experiences in Muqdisho confirm the prevalence of such alumni networks in the current SFG, particularly in the judicial and security apparatuses of the state.

In many respects, the elite political arena of Muqdisho is characterised both by clan/regional competition and the factionalism of political Islamists. The latter are organised within semi-institutionalised cliques such as Dam al Jadiid, the group which is popularly perceived to dominate the current presidency and which itself emerged as a splinter group of the Somalia's Muslim Brotherhood-orientated Al Islaax movement. The lack of a popularly recognisable or institutionalised party system provides fertile ground for narratives in the public sphere that foreground various shadowy clan or religious clique-based political groupings. Popular resentment against Dam Jadiid, does not centre around their ill-defined political Islamist ideology, but rather the nefarious influence

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

of unaccountable networks on the office of the Presidency and perceived corruption²⁵. While the state insists (particularly to its Western backers) that it is waging an ‘ideological’ battle against AS²⁶, there is no clear secular/Islamist divide in political discourse; Somalia is being reconstructed as an Islamic state whose current power holders condemn AS violence as an affront to the Somali nation and as running contrary to Islam.

Geopolitical factors also impact on the wider ideological character of governmental politics in Muqdisho. Somalia is being courted by important regional players, notably Saudi Arabia and Turkey in the context of competition for influence vis-à-vis the broader Horn of Africa. Both regimes, espousing different brands of political Islam, have invested significantly in the Somali Federal Government. Turkey is a highly visible humanitarian, diplomatic and economic actor in Muqdisho while Saudi Arabia recently pledged \$50 Million in aid in return for the SFG’s severing of diplomatic ties with Iran. De Waal identifies intra-Sunni competition in this diplomatic contest with ‘Turkish and Qatar-backed candidates pitted against those funded by the Wahhabi alliance’. The political effects of Somalia’s increased importance in a Gulf-Horn-Red-Sea nexus are already being felt in domestic politics and ‘in the country’s national elections scheduled for September, Arab- and Wahhabi-affiliated candidates for parliament could very well sweep the board’²⁷.

Outside of conflict zones in south-central Somalia (and Puntland), Islamism also plays a role in the public sphere of Somaliland. Here, while political discourse often revolves around the partisan system and electoral politics and intrigue, similar dynamics of socio-religious change, increased expression of public piety and critiques of foreign, ‘un-Islamic’ influence are frequently visible. High profile preachers influence public sentiment around moral controversies (see Chapter 3’s discussion of the Hargeysa International Book Fair) and undercurrents of suspicion against foreign agendas periodically manifest themselves in the public sphere. Humanitarian agencies or individual actors may come under scrutiny (or be deported) for alleged Christian proselytising²⁸, while political

²⁵ See Xaqiiqa Times newspaper editorial, Muqdisho, March 10-23, 2015, ‘*Dam Jadiid ma ihi*’ [I’m not Dam Jadiid]. The writer gives an overview of the various Islamist cliques jockeying for position in Muqdisho (often linked to particular institutions, businesses or higher education establishments) and decries the lack of clear partisan competition; groups define themselves simply in opposition to the current ruling (but unofficial) group, hence the article’s title, a common refrain from those vying for power.

²⁶ Somali Federal Government, Deputy Prime Minister Maxamed Cumar Carte, Chatham House, London, March 16, 2016 (event held ‘on the record’)

²⁷ Alex De Waal, Foreign Policy, March 17, 2016, ‘Africa’s \$700 billion problem waiting to happen’ <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/03/17/africas-700-billion-problem-waiting-to-happen-ethiopia-horn-of-africa/>

²⁸ Somaliland Live.com, March 16, 2013 ‘*Sheekh Aden Sunne Oo Sheegay in ay Hargeisa Joogaan Ragg Faafinaya Diinta Kiristanka*’ [Sheekh Aden Sunne says that there is a man in Hargeysa promoting Christianity]: <http://somalilandlive.com/articles/3586/Sheekh-Aden-Sunne-Oo-Sheegay-in-ay-Hargeisa-Joogaan-Ragg-Faafinaya-Diinta-Kiristanka> (accessed March 17, 2013). This particular preacher has waged a campaign against alleged Christian missionary activity in Hargeysa and has succeeded in lobbying the Somaliland government to deport this particular individual (a doctor) as well as a Norwegian humanitarian organisation (NNM) in 2014. Nevertheless, Sheekh Sunne’s provocative preaching (and ambiguous support for a Somali Jihad) have attracted the attentions of Somaliland security forces, wary of ‘extremist’ rhetoric.

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

interventions from the *Beesha Caalamka* (the ‘International Community’) may be interpreted as being ‘culturally’ or ‘religiously’ motivated.

During my last period of fieldwork in Hargeysa in 2015, local newspapers were full of heated commentary on the European Union’s response to Somaliland’s apparent reinstitution of the death penalty after an unofficial moratorium. Commentators were universally opposed to the EU’s rebuke which was seen as an affront both to Islam and the ‘national’ integrity of Somaliland. At its most extreme, the rhetoric from the Hargeysan Mosques stretched to accusations of Western conspiracy: foreign exhortations against the application of Shariah interpreted as a plot to promote insecurity in Somaliland, fomenting violence amongst the Ummah, who would kill each other or become refugees, going to live in camps from which Western agencies or states would benefit²⁹. While such radical conspiracy narratives (which echo the AS discourse on western humanitarian agencies discussed above) cannot be said to be directly representative of wider public opinion on the streets of Hargeysa, that they are expressed at all in a religious and media public sphere is significant, particularly in a context where sensitivities towards religious fidelity *are* of great popular importance.

This glance at Somaliland highlights the salience of conservative religious discourse and periodic manifestations of anti-foreign suspicion, in a Somali public sphere that is not characterised by the type of endemic violence experienced in many parts of southern Somalia. In Somaliland, the socio-cultural influence of reformist Islam operates alongside relative political stability, partisan competition and democratic mechanisms. Somaliland’s governmental and judicial structures incorporate elements of Islamic law and all politicians identify as Muslims (as do virtually the entire population). Although certain politicians may have a reputation for a more hardline ‘Islamist’ stance, partisan conventions prevent explicit religiously-orientated campaigning. While AS is seen from Hargeysa as a problem of ‘Somalia’ (indicative of insecurity and political mismanagement), aspects of the discourses around Islam, Somali ‘culture’ and foreign influence engineered or exploited by these militants are not absent from the Somaliland public sphere.

As this discussion illustrates, ‘Islamism’ in Somalia transcends AS militancy, with the disappearance of explicitly secular political discourse being a function of historical experience under the Barre regime and socio-religious changes which have characterised Somali society through the ‘failed’ state period. Menkhaus has described ‘Somali’ Islam as the ‘veil lightly worn’ (2002, 111) and emphasised the continued primacy of *xeer* (customary law) over *Shariah*. A decade later, while recognizing wider socio-religious changes, Anderson follows this logic to assert that AS’s temporary ascendancy would be ‘difficult to sustain [as] previous experience in Somalia indicates that Islamic fundamentalism will dissipate again when the threat of foreign invasion subsides’ (Anderson 2012, 23). AS’s period of ‘ascendancy’ is, sure enough, over. However, I argue that critiques and fears of persistent (or permanent) foreign occupation or intrigue remain highly salient throughout the public

²⁹The Imam of the Daarul Quraan Mosque in Xawaadle neighbourhood, Hargeysa, quoted in Saxansaxo newspaper, Hargeysa, April 18, 2015.

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

spheres of media debate across Somalia. Critiques of this nature against AMISOM were illustrated in the previous chapter with reference to the work of cartoonist Amin Amir, an influential commentator occupying a generational ideological standpoint otherwise diametrically opposed to that of AS.

While such narratives are latent (and only sporadically manifest) in the more stable political context of Somaliland, they are acutely relevant in south-central Somalia where foreign occupation continues alongside the political reconfiguration of the federalisation of Somalia. Some commentators in the public sphere emphasise the role of external actors in the counter-insurgency and federalisation processes, noting that future Islamist militants - 'worse' than Al Shabaab, and more akin to the 'Islamic State' - might be able to reclaim the torch of anti-imperialist jihadi nationalism and claim that they are defending Somalia's interests³⁰. These critical discourses range from conspiracy theories emphasising the trans-historical dominance of the Ethiopian state over the Somali territory, the current Kenyan agenda in south, or the interests of other AMISOM contingents content to take their African Union salaries leaving them no good reason to end the conflict and leave Somali soil. In a context of media fragmentation and intense suspicion towards outside agendas, rumours and misinformation can hold great currency. This is a fact not lost on propagandists, including those who support AS.

5.6. Ethno-nationalism and the global jihad: a contradiction in terms?

External commentary, both academic and journalistic, continues to attempt to predict the trajectory of AS militancy, tracing the group's apparent 'decline', 'return'³¹ or shifting of their primary battlefield towards the wider East Africa region (Agbibo 2015). While certain high profile or spectacular attacks – both by and on the group – may influence such fluid speculation, a more sustained reading of AS militancy since 2012 shows a consistency and relative operational coherence in their patterns of violence, indicative of the fact that Somalia (as an ethnically defined, trans-border constituency) has remained a primary focus for the group's political ambitions.

The deployment of particular tropes of 'Somali' ethno-nationalist identity is one part of AS's broad, ambiguous and sometimes contradictory communications strategy designed to maximise the range of potential sympathetic audiences both inside Somalia and abroad. In communications regarding their 'operations' in Kenya, their narrative speaks both to a 'Greater Somalia' trans-border ethnic Somali community (who are all Muslims) and a wider Islamic constituency of Kenyans, not all of whom are necessarily Somali.

³⁰ See Cabdullahi Ibraahim's (26 March 2015), commentary, characteristic of innumerable critiques in the 'mainstream' Somali public sphere decrying the influence of foreign powers: '*Maamul Goboleedyadu ma Federaalka Itoobiya bay ka tirsan yihiin?*' [Are the regional administrations just part of Federal Ethiopia?] http://www.keydmedia.net/editorial/article/federaalkee_bay_ka_tirsan_yihiin_maamul_goboleedyada_itoobiya_mise_kan/

³¹ See also Ainte & Meleagreu-Hitchens, the Daily Beast, March 15, 2016 'The Return of Al Shabaab' <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/03/15/the-return-of-al-shabaab.html>

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

Ambiguities here allow propagandists to play on the history of colonial division of Somalia and grievances of the ethnically Somali population of northeastern Kenya, and at the same time position the conflict in religious as opposed to ethnic terms. This then encompasses other non-Somali Muslims, particularly along the coast who have similarly rooted complaints about ‘Christian’ Kenyans from the interior and their alleged control of land, resources and state institutions. Transnational in message, transnational in means, pro-AS propagandists are not adverse to employing international media sources or advocacy group materials (such as Al Jazeera English or International Crisis Group) to promote their case in this regard, using such material either to justify their cause or demonstrate external perceptions of their strength and resilience in the face of counter insurgency efforts³².

The purported struggle for the ‘Global Caliphate’ and identification with other militant Islamist groups (Al Qaeda, for example) jars both practically and ideologically with the Somali ethno-nationalist tone of much AS-affiliated communication, and may be indicative of the factional ‘internationalist/nationalist’ split noted from the outset of the paper. However, in the same way that this divide has not seemed to have seriously compromised the military operational capacity of the group (particularly the highly centralised, secretive and elite *Amniyat* intelligence and special operations units), the discursive contradictions of their wider communications strategy have served not so much as a limitation but rather an enabler of ideological projection to wider potential constituencies in the region.

In assessing both the potential appeal of (and the apparent paradoxes inherent in) discourses of nationalist-inspired jihad, it is useful to examine specific designations of ‘Somali’ culture in the above texts in the context of an Islamist insurgency entwined in local (or clan-based) political intrigues. The productive practices presented in the films examined above are related to an economic conception of ‘Somali’ resources and ‘traditional’ practices of both agro-pastoral and pastoral groups. This is important in that it straddles different conceptualisations of Somali identity linked to regional diversity and the status of different clan-constructs associating themselves with particular economic activities: pastoralism/agro-pastoralism or ‘caste’-type associations of particular trades. Significant here is the discursive distinction often made between the traditionally pastoral ‘Samaale’ clan-family constructs of the Daarood, Dir/Isaaq and Hawiye, and the (‘Sab’) agro-pastoralist Raxanweyne of the inter-riverine areas of the south, as well as other ethnic groups falling outside of this broader Somali lineage system. Not being able to engage fully here with the flexibility, fluidity and complexity on the ground of these constructs (this is picked up in the subsequent chapter), I simply point out that the AS narrative of the material analysed emphasises the shared ‘Somali-ness’ of the activities discussed, and at the same time implicitly highlights the value of impartial application of the Shariah in contexts where clan contestation and marginalisation is particularly acute.

³² See Somalimemo.net (pro-Jihadi) Somali translation of Al Jazeera Report ‘Not yet Kenyan’, 2 April 2014 (no longer available online, copy in writer’s possession)

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

This is particularly relevant for so-called ‘minority’ groups who sit outside of the main four Somali lineage constructs (Hill 2010) and who will likely continue to be politically marginalised through the institutionalised ‘4.5’ clan-based allocation of positions in the embryonic federal system. Such issues influence possible interpretations of the AS propaganda material focusing on somewhere like Baraawe; home to such a ‘minority’ population which may identify itself, to an extent and in varying circumstances, outside of the linguistic, cultural, historical or ethnic conceptions of ‘Somali’ identity³³. AS recruitment from clan groupings who fall into such a ‘minority’ category or who are dissatisfied with their political share in the regional federalisation process is well established, and these videos, whilst not naming any specific groups, could be read to contain implicit appeals to particular audiences.

In other propaganda material the appeals to specific ‘minority’ clan groupings is more explicit. Recordings of meetings of the ‘Islamic Governorate of Lower Shabelle’ depict representatives of the historically marginalised Jareer Weyne (described as ‘one of the Somali communities’) pledging allegiance to the jihad³⁴. With a similar motive, the Al Furqaan radio documentary *‘Taariikhda dahabiga ah ee ay Beesha Biyamaal ku leedahay la halganka gumeystihii Talyaani’* (The Golden history of the Biimaal Community in the struggle against Italian colonialism) appeals to this specific community, currently embroiled in struggles for land in Lower Shabelle against the (perceived) Hawiye-dominated State encroaching from Muqdisho³⁵. While this particular conflict (and clan argumentation in the public sphere in general) is discussed in greater detail in the subsequent chapter, integral to this analysis is the way in which such AS communication links contemporary micro-contestation to a historical anti-imperialist narrative, one which associates any SFG agency with infidel colonisers.

That the internal coherence of AS is itself, at times, compromised by clan-related intrigues is undoubted (Bryden 2014, 5). However, what is of relevance here is the public presentation of narratives of ‘traditional’ political-social organisation alongside jihadi struggle. It is important to draw attention to the ways in which pro-AS media often explicitly portrays the group as a mediator between or distinct actor vis-à-vis self-defined clan-groupings, all in the context of the ongoing conflict. This may take the form of AS facilitating clan reconciliation in areas which it controls or announcements

³³ Baraawe is home to the Barawani (Bravanese) people (who are often categorised amongst the wider ‘Benadiri’ populations of the port cities of Southern Somalia, and are descendents of the Arab mercantile communities).

³⁴ Somalimemo.net, October 12, 2015 *‘Dhageyso – Beesha Jareerweyne iyo Wilaayada Islaamiga Shabelle Hoose oo kulan muhiim ah yeehay’* [Listen – Jareer Weyne community and Islamic Governorate of Lower Shabelle hold important meeting] <http://somalimemo.net/articles/3679/DhageysoBeesha-Jareer-Weyne-iy-Wilaayada-Islaamiga-ShHoose-oo-Kulan-Muhiim-ah-Yeeshay>

³⁵ Al Furqaan/Voice of Somalia, August 5, 2015 *‘Taariikhda Dahabiga ah ee ay Beesha Biyamaal ku Leedahay la Halganka Gumeystihii Talyaani’* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvJxvPv47VE>

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

of clan ‘representatives’ support for the jihad³⁶. Crucially, there is an amalgamation here of ‘Somali’ and ‘Islamic’ signifiers of identity, for example, in the apparent application of *xeer*-based norms of inter-clan relations *along with* the supposedly impartial application of Shariah. These presentations gloss over the details of local conflict, defining a wider struggle in terms of a united and homogenous ethno-religious community versus foreign ‘infidels’ and their apostate ‘stooges’.

5.7. Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was ambitious: to frame ‘Islamism’ in the context of public spheres of political commentary and debate *across* the Somali territories. The analysis of the various texts has highlighted the various ways in which different actors employ religious-political argumentation, and the ways in which these relate to the modern socio-cultural context of Somali Islam. This chapter has avoided dichotomising parochial ‘nationalist’ and grand ‘internationalist’ agendas of AS. In the context of the wider thesis, it instead argues that the inherent trans-nationalism of the imagined ethno-religious community of the *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed* (and the associated public sphere) allows these discourses to coexist and be used ambiguously to appeal to multiple potentially sympathetic audiences.

This chapter has not asserted that AS retains significant levels of popular support amongst ‘ordinary’ Somalis, not least because this would be impossible to quantifiably verify with any degree of accuracy. It has instead demonstrated how its propaganda producers utilise narratives of the historical division of Somalia and the current exploitation by ‘neo-colonialists’ of political and societal cleavages: discourses which are all prevalent in the wider Somali public spheres of political communication and debate, across the territories. The analysis of specific media texts has illustrated how the conflict narrative of AS and its application of motifs of Somali ethno-nationalism ‘work’ in the context of political fragmentation and popular perceptions of the prevalence of external interference in modern Somalia. The chapter has also demonstrated how ‘Al Shabaab’ has been ‘spectralized’ within this broader Somali-language public sphere, and the ways in which its very existence or agency is deployed as a rhetorical trope by state actors such as Somaliland or Puntland manoeuvring on the wider discursive battlefield of Somali political reconfiguration.

Whilst AS’s moment of legitimacy and the potential for rekindling that early support may well have passed, a narrative politics which engages explicitly labelled ‘Somali’ perceptions of history and shared ethno-national identity remains potentially at the disposal of other challengers to existing and emerging power-holders within a reconfigured federal Somalia. One should not underestimate the obstacles that clan and regional real-politick hold for the emergence of any such

³⁶ Radio Al Furqaan, January 2014, ‘*Daawo Sawirada Kulankii Dhex Maray Xarakada Mujaahidiinta Al-Shabaab Iyo Beesha H/Gidir.(Dhagayso)*’ [See pictures of meeting between ASAS and the Habir Gedir Community (Listen)] <http://radioalfurqaan.com/?p=10987> (accessed June 8, 2015).

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

new or rebranded ‘nationalist’ contenders for power, nor assume that AS has itself managed to transcend these local dynamics of contestation. Nevertheless, these are narratives which fighters willingly kill and die for, and simply attributing militant agency to the combination of instrumentalisation by elites and blind allegiance of the ‘brain-washed’ is analytically unsatisfying in the broader socio-political context of modern Somalia. The history of the emergence and development of AS itself as a fairly diverse cross-clan and effective administrative entity itself testifies to at least the future possibility of this type of mobilisation, and the slick propaganda capabilities of media organisations sympathetic to its agenda should not be underestimated.

Uncertainty surrounding political transition in 2016 and the viability of the federal reconfiguration process only adds to the potential for conflict and reversal of political and security progress made since 2012. Furthermore, dynamics within AS itself - particularly with regard to divisions already manifesting themselves over potential affiliations towards the ‘Islamic State’ and the wider international jihadi context – may produce opportunities for new militant actors to emerge onto the narrative battlefield explored above.

Ultimately, whilst one may abhor the violence against civilians which AS’s conflict narrative attempts to legitimize, its ideological appeals to doctrinal clarity and coherence deserve critical attention from scholars, as well as policy and humanitarian practitioners working in Somalia. Such analysis must foreground both the broader influence of international jihadi mobilisation, as well as local conditions conducive to militant Islamist activism - themselves grounded in wider dynamics of socio-religious change, shared conceptualisations of historical ethno-religious identity, and popular perceptions of Somalia’s geopolitical place in wider region and world.

5. Islamism, nationalism and narrative politics in the Somali public sphere

6. Federalist papers: polemical prose and the politics of division in the Somali public sphere

‘Dugsi ma leh qabyaaladii waxay dumiso mooyaane’

(Clanism has no benefit, it is only destruction)

Abwaan Cabdilaahi Suldaan Maxamed Timacadde

6.1. Introduction

The third and final type of media text explored here is the written Somali-language opinion piece (*faallo/fikrado/maqaallo*). Like Amin Amir’s cartoons or the multimedia Jihadi propaganda analysed in the previous chapters, written polemic political texts circulate within the wider Somali public sphere of news and social media. As emphasised in previous chapters, this public sphere can be seen to have a dual character: local media production centred in individual capitals of various political administrations coexists and overlaps with a transnational arena of Somali-language broadcasting and debate. The opinion pieces analysed by this chapter straddle these different levels of the public sphere. They may appear online or in print newspapers that are consumed primarily in particular geographical locations, but they may also be reproduced across multiple sites with or without the intent of the author to reinforce different political narratives or introduce topics deemed by editors and site managers to be of interest to wider, often transnational, Somali audiences. The writers of the pieces analysed below vary in terms of their background and location: some are young journalists, ‘activists’ and aspiring leaders; others are sitting politicians in Somalia or presidential candidates; others are of an older generation and primarily based in diaspora. They are all men, representative of the fact that male voices dominate this type of political communication in the public sphere.

This chapter analyses a sample of written opinion pieces selected on the basis of the following criteria: firstly, each of the texts presented and analysed date from the post-2012 installation of the Somali Federal Government in Muqdisho. This period marked a substantive (if highly conflicted) shift in the political and military dynamics of state reconstruction and witnessed the constitutional emergence of a ‘Federal’ road map for the reconfiguration of the Somali state. As such, the second criteria for selection was a piece’s explicit discussion of the ‘division’ of Somalia in clan and/or geographical terms. Thirdly, the texts presented here deal with regional politics encompassing each of my three fieldwork sites (Somaliland, Puntland, or Muqdisho-centred media) and the relations between these entities. Fourthly, they have also each been reproduced across multiple online or print formats.

One purpose of this sampling is to comparatively explore the ways in which content is transmitted and reproduced across a transnational Somali-language public sphere. These texts directly

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

engage with how Somali political identities or nationalisms are articulated in relation to factors understood to divide the *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*. Often this division (*qaybyaalad*) is either implicitly or explicitly associated with the genealogical concept of ‘clan’. The objective of this chapter is not to point out the biases or contradictions of rhetorical constructions of ‘clan-speak’ in media texts, but instead examine the the changing relationships that exist between discursive patterns visible in media and ongoing political processes. For example, this approach engages the increased ‘territorialisation’ of lineage-based politics identified by scholars such as Barnes (2006), Cassanelli (2015) and Hoehne (2016) in the post state-collapse era, or institutionalisations of clan-identification in modern Somali politics - most notably in the aforementioned, oft-condemned, but persistent ‘4.5’ system of power allocation, a mechanism which remains (for now) fixed at the centre of the political, electoral and federal reconfiguration of Somalia.

This chapter does not assert that ‘clan’ is the primary discursive feature of political contestation in Somali public spheres. To do so would be to fall into a reductive logic that links all drivers of conflict across the Somali territories to supposedly primordial attachments to lineage networks of identity, and social organisation. Nonetheless, ideas of ‘clan’ (*qabiil*) and (clan) ‘division’ (*qabyaalad*) exist in the public spheres of media and political commentary across and beyond the political centres that are the focus of this thesis. If these concepts’ analytical utility and historical-intellectual lineage are hotly debated in Somali studies, then it remains important to consider their dynamic and changing positions within the discourses of political actors and commentators who live the modern politics of state reconfiguration across Southern Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland. People in these political environments make arguments about ‘clan’ or ‘clanism’: they write books and editorials, make films or draw cartoons in which these concepts are presented as nouns, adjectives, even verbs; they form organisations to combat the very existence of ‘tribalism’. The previous chapters have already introduced tropes of ‘division’ in these specific discursive contexts and have positioned these ideas alongside other narrative tropes of cultural or religious ethno-nationalism.

Whilst there is literature that deals with partisan political communication in the Somali media (often with a focus on the diaspora), there is relatively little discursive analysis of how narratives based around ‘division’ are actually constructed. Osman (2015), for example, uses a primarily quantitative approach in recording the type or frequency of specific arguments, in terms of ‘mobilisation’, ‘solidarity’ or ‘recognition’. Whilst recognising their value, I avoid such typologies, sacrificing breadth for more in-depth critical discourse analysis of specific texts. This analysis looks at how vocabularies of clan are used in political commentary and news media: what can be named, how, when, to which ends, what has changed? Following earlier reflections on the inherently transnational character of Somali news media, the chapter again problematises the straightforward distinction between diasporic and ‘local’ media production. The commentators discussed below come from different geographical and generational backgrounds and maintain different types of links with the

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

diaspora: some are local journalists and activists, others are firmly situated abroad, others straddle these worlds and move back and forth for different commercial, personal, educational or ‘civil society’ purposes.

This chapter argues that there exists a dynamic and dialectical relationship - visible in the public sphere - between one perceived element of Somali political culture (clan), and notions of Somali cultural homogeneity. ‘Clanism’ in the texts explored here is usually conceptualised as a primary factor explaining conflict and the political fragmentation of Somalia. This is accompanied by implicit assertions of the socio-cultural ubiquity of lineage identifications, thus contributing to the maintenance of particular presentations of Somali identity that emphasise cultural homogeneity. The Somali ‘nation’ is at once destroyed and remade in narratives of ‘clanism’. As clan or clanism is conceptualized as a feature of ‘Somali’ identity it enters into a wider discursive environment preoccupied with the division of the ethnically-defined Somali population over multiple political boundaries. Here discourses of ‘division’ interact with narratives of ethno-nationalism and Islamism as purported remedies to what is presented as a political-cultural malaise - a concept ubiquitous, even institutionalised, yet also constantly lamented over and critiqued.

The chapter proceeds with an overview of scholarly debates in Somali studies on the nature of ‘clan’ division and its utility as a frame of analysis for modern politics. This discussion positions and justifies the discursive and regional comparative approach adopted by this chapter. This is followed by an examination of the genre of polemic prose in the modern Somali public sphere, situated within a wider history of Somali literary culture and political communication. Many of these forms of production have been introduced by previous chapters and have played a role in longstanding debates over the tension between ‘clan’ and ‘nationalist’ identity. Analysis is offered of the changing ways in which texts circulate through different layers of the Somali public sphere and how this ‘public’ itself is constructed. Several texts are then presented and analysed which speak to (or engage with) audiences in Southern Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland. Aside from discourse analysis of content, the discussion highlights the different identities of the writers and – in Barber’s terms – what these texts *say, do and are* (2007, 200).

6.2. Conceptualising ‘*Qaybyaalad*’ in Somali studies

Recognition of the sensitivities which surround the controversial topics of clan or clanism is vital, particularly given the unreconciled legacy of the types of violence (outlined in Chapter one) that precipitated and followed the collapse of the Somali state. Kapteijns recounts how a non-Somali scholar greatly angered a Somali audience at an academic conference in 1993 by citing poetry mentioning particular clan identities. Participants became furious and ‘indignantly pointed out that they considered neither his speech nor that of the poets he quoted legitimate in the context of simultaneously shared public Somali space’ (Kapteijns 2012, 54). The writings or arguments presented in this chapter have been produced for what is - theoretically, at least – a shared public

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

Somali space: either in online news media accessible to anyone with an internet connection and knowledge of the language, or in print media in socially diverse urban centres. The arguments advanced in these texts may be primarily intended for certain audiences, and their provocative sensationalism may in part be influenced by the aforementioned commercial logics of tabloid-style ‘clickbait’ production. Nevertheless, their existence in a wider and truly public sphere influences the rhetorical strategies used, and their appeals for (logical or emotive) legitimacy are usually pitched to a broader audience often defined in the terms of *Soomaalinimo* or *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*.

Conceptualising tropes of division in ‘macro’ and ‘micro’ terms can, *at times*, be helpful for understanding their existence in the wider Somali media ecology. ‘Macro’ level narratives of clan-political contestation revolve around the conceptualisation of political identities based on the broadest level of the segmentary patrilineal genealogical system of *abtirso/abtirsiino* (the counting of one’s forefathers back to a common ancestor). This encompasses the idea that there exist four major Somali ‘clan families’ spread out across the Somali Horn of Africa. These ‘clan-families’, which are divided down into the myriad clan and sub-clan groupings, are characterised at this ‘top’ level as being of the Daarood, the Dir (which may or may not include the Isaaq, itself a politically charged question in relation to the identity of an entity such as Somaliland, see Elmi 2010, 29), the Hawiye, and the Raxanweyne (otherwise known by its two constituent segments, the Digil & Mirifle).

As noted in previous chapters, the Daarood, Dir/Isaaq and the Hawiye have been traditionally referred to as the ‘Samaale’ clan families, conceived of as being characterised by their historic association with nomadic pastoralism. This is in contrast to the ‘Sab’ categorisation of the Raxanweyne¹ (and other so-called minority ethnic or caste-based groups falling outside of the main Somali lineages) who are predominantly sedentary agro-pastoralists and concentrated in the inter-riverine areas of southern Somalia. Samatar alludes to the prestige of the former identity construct in stating that ‘even those clan families, such as the Digil and Rahanweyne in Southern Somalia, many members of whom do not trace their genealogy directly to Samaale, readily identify themselves as Somalis, thereby accepting, at least in a symbolic sense, the primacy of Samaale, as the forebear of the Somali people’ (1991, 13). This reinforces the discourse that the very word ‘Soomaali’ derives from one side of this imprecise and pejorative binary categorisation, thus placing a predominantly pastoralist culture at the centre of many people’s imaginations of Somali identity. Colonial structures and advancements of suffrage in the process of decolonisation historically privileged the predominantly ‘northern’ pastoralist clans at the expense of southern agriculturalists (Laitin & Samatar 1987, 65), while Ahad’s (2015) recent analysis of the *Deelley* poetic debate in the context of

¹ For a discussion of the difference in clanship conceptions and structure amongst the Raxanweyne (Reewin) in contrast to “‘standard Somali” notions of descent’ see Helander 1997 (132). Whilst the validity of the claims (or generalisations) may be interrogated further, this serves an example of the discursive definition of this group outside of the predominantly ‘pastoral’ framework of the other historically dominant clan families.

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

the Barre's revolutionary, nationalist state demonstrates the discursive reification of pastoralist heritage (and conceptions of kinship) at the heart of this project.

This basic discursive division of peoples also has an important linguistic component which has been noted in previous chapters. The 'Samaale' clans predominantly speak different dialects of *Af Maxaa Tiri*, the 'Somali' that became standardized by Barre's military regime, whereas *Af Maay* is the mother tongue of many of the Raxanweyne, particularly in the agricultural inter-riverine areas of the south. The question of whether or not *Af Maay* and *Af Maxaa Tiri* are different Somali 'dialects' or, in fact, should be considered different languages, is one that continues to bedevil both linguists and activists. The debate carries great emotive weight for those who emphasise the marginalisation of *Maay* speaking communities in the wider political history of Somalia (Kusow, 1995). That there remains a debate as to the proper classification of the tongues is indicative of the fact that they are significantly different from each other and are largely mutually unintelligible. The historical formalisation of *Af Maxaa Tiri* and the development of literature in this script (as we have seen, at the heart of the Somali nation state project) has both furthered the cultural dominance of discourses of pastoral cultural heritage and has created the 'Somali-language' public sphere that this thesis engages with. Given constraints on research and a far more limited range of written material in this language, the current status of *Af Maay* is in need of detailed research (beyond the scope of this study). Of particular interest would be the relationship between a *Maxaa Tiri lingua franca*, and everyday experiences of political administration and the development of new regional state structures². The consolidation of the Southwest State (where the majority of *Maay* speakers reside) and improved security conditions may make such research (which has recently only been possible in refugee camps across the border in Ethiopia) possible in the coming years (Yetbarek 2017).

This brief overview belies a wealth of diversity and contestation over categorisations which will be addressed as I review the relevant debates in the literature below. Nevertheless, the texts that I examine emanate from administrative centres that are all dominated by the so-called 'Samaale' clan families, and thus, in general, narratives from 'minorities' or predominantly agro-pastoralist populations are not directly engaged with in the analysis. The historical influence of the dominance of the pastoral cultural heritage within the Somali nation-state project thus remains in the background of this analysis of modern political discourse, and, as we shall see, the 'Samaale'/'Sab' distinction does not operate as explicit mobilising political identity. What is of interest to this chapter is the extent to which other 'macro' distinctions made between the dominant Somali clan-families find direct expression in media texts in the public spheres of different political centres. Polemics based, for example, on the historical agency of the *beelaha Hawiye* (the Hawiye clans, indicating their

² In my own professional experiences working in prisons in Baydhabo (capital of the new Southwest state), I was able to use *Maxaa Tiri* as a working language for basic communication with authorities and detainees for whom the majority had *Maay* as a mother tongue. This is indicative of the continued dissemination and dominance of *Maxaa Tiri* in media and politics, even in the context of prolonged state collapse.

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

subdivision down through the genealogical system), or the disputed conceptualisation of a supposed *Daaroodnimo* (the clan identity fixed as a noun in the discourse, analogous to constructions of *Soomaalinimo* as an expression of shared ethno-cultural heritage and solidarity) can be found in written political commentary or analysis. Although the legitimacy of invoking such labels in shared Somali space may be disputed, it is clear they exist as operationalise-able categories in the rhetoric of some actors, particularly in polemic discussions of the political history of modern Somalia and geographical dispersals of power. Even more concretely, these ‘macro’ labels of clan families are institutionalised in the reconfiguration of an emerging federal Somalia through the continuing use of the ‘4.5’ system of representative quotas in indirect elections. As noted in previous chapters, the media plays an important role here in reproducing these ambiguous and semi-official categories, for example, in the listing of clan details of politicians appointed in Muqdisho or the southern Federal regions through such mechanisms.

Alongside these grand portrayals of clan-family agency, regional dominance or political strategising can be found ‘micro’ articulations of clan interests at a local or sub-clan (and so on) level. These may constitute intra clan-family tensions (for example, the presentations of competing clan identities amongst the Isaaq who are the largest clan constituency in Somaliland) or be seen at the level of neighbourhood politics in Muqdisho where different power-holders (for instance competing Habir Gedir, Abgaal or Murusade lineages of the Hawiye) manoeuvre amongst re-emerging state structures. The same multiplicity, fluidity, and contingency of potential clan conflict or alliance emphasised in academic literature (Luling 2006, 474) is found in the types of contestation that are presented and commented on in the media. As the texts below demonstrate, these narratives of intra-clan contestation often overlap with presentations of the bigger regional picture and overly rigid distinctions between these ‘macro’ and ‘micro’ narratives can prove analytically problematic. For this reason, I highlight the co-existence of grand narratives that involve wider definitions of clan-family agency, alongside local contestation which may be placed in this wider political context.

Luling emphasises the fluidity of the clan ‘system’ in terms of alignments of actors and argues that whilst an abstract notion of ‘clanship’ cannot explain conflict in Somalia or the line-ups of contesting actors it can, however, ‘define the possibilities for lining up’ (2006, 472). She uses a Geertzian conception of primordialism and stresses the perceived naturalness in society of this system of genealogical identification. This echoes Lewis’ description of ‘invisible differences’ contrasted with ‘visible differences’ of ethnicity, culture, language and religion which Western observers expect to be decisive (Lewis, 2004). Such ‘primordial’ conceptions, according to Lewis, actually emphasise the rationality of the social system that encompasses mechanisms of war and peace-making, social identity and welfare. Somewhat counter-intuitively, this type of analysis challenges accounts of the primordial which assume an inevitability of thoughtless or irrational violence as the basis of identity formation and collective agency.

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

Luling asserts that the primary dynamics of ‘most Somali conflicts’ have revolved around these genealogical ‘invisible differences’ between clans within the Somali lineage structure. Whilst such conflicts are differentiated from those involving those groups such as the Bantu/Jareer or the various Benadiri communities whose genealogies are imagined to be outside of this system, she acknowledges that it has often been these groups which have suffered disproportionately in ensuing phases of violence and land-grabbing (2006, 472). These latter groups are themselves highly diverse and often identified by misleading or pejorative labels. What is most instructive for this chapter’s analysis of political communication is Luling’s commentary on the appropriation by these groups of the vocabularies of clan representation. Luling highlights the linguistic logic of the self description of the Bantu, for instance, as a *beel* or *qowmiyad* (clan/ethnicity) for the purpose of securing representation within the then Transitional Federal Government (*Ibid* 481). Chapter four noted the designation of *Beesha Shanaad* (the 5th clan/community) to denote all ‘minority’ groups in receipt of their half share of representation (compared to the main clan families) in the ‘4.5’ system and this naming highlights conventions by which groups in Somalia are co-opted into a governmental system defined by the genealogical constructs most characteristic of the pastoral, ‘northern’ clan families.

The concept of primordialism generated scholarly controversy in the immediate post-1991 period as scholars scrambled to explain the explosion of societal violence that followed the fall of the military regime. These debates were epitomised by the heated confrontation between Lewis and Besteman, clashing over interpretations of clan-identity and mobilisations of violence. Lewis described Besteman’s account - of how conflict in Somalia was ‘othered’ as primordial savagery in contemporary US media coverage - as ‘doing violence to ethnography’ and asserted that she had misunderstood the fundamental and yet fluid historical-social structures of lineage networks in the context (Lewis 1998). Lewis attempted to flip the terms of the debate on ‘primordialism’ by accusing Besteman herself of an evolutionist perspective which (in her emphasis on class and race) painted clan identity in terms of pre-civilized irrationality. Lewis argued that one can conceive of clan both as holding a ‘supreme moral force’ for people who view it as a ‘natural fact’, without it standing inimical to a political ‘modernity’ of contingent alignments and material interests (1998, 105). Besteman’s reply focused on Lewis’s ‘primordialist blinders’ which precluded adequate focus on the particular dynamics of colonial-driven social change and the development of 20th Century state structures as factors which influenced post-state collapse violence – a period historically distinct from the centuries-old examples cited in his initial critique (Besteman 1998, 109).

Barnes contextualises the Lewis/Besteman exchange in his exploration of the concept of *u dhashay/ku dhashay*: the notions of being born ‘to’ a place or being born ‘in’ a place which have changed over time in meaning and significance for clan and territoriality (2006, 496). He notes that the application of the *u dhashay/ku dhashay* shorthand on contemporary (southern) clan-conflicts constitutes a historicity that is “neither ‘invented tradition’ nor the wilful imposition of ‘primordialist blinders’” (2006, 496). Instead, Barnes highlights how these two foreign scholars’ positions actually

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

epitomised the wider generational, geographical and theoretical rifts which were opening up within Somali studies. Lewis, whose career stretched back to the British colonial administration for which he worked, was long the doyen of the field and represented a largely northern-centric lens of ‘Somali’ studies (Kapteijns 2004). These perspectives traditionally privileged the cultural heritage of nomadic pastoralism (including, as it does, the classic segmentary lineage system of the so called ‘Samaale’ clan families) and its influence on the political-sociology of a wider Somalia. In anti and post-colonial struggles this focus was itself of political utility in its emphasis on nationalist homogeneity and the legitimisation of the pan/Greater Somali project – the ‘invention’ of Somalia, as Ahmed *et al.* would have it (1995). Kapteijns argues that the colonial understanding of clanship (that Lewis exemplified), far from being vindicated by the seemingly primordial clan dynamics of the civil war, was itself responsible for influencing the ‘self-views’ of many Somalis to the extent that this made possible such forms of violence (2004, 1).

Besteman, according to Barnes, represented a younger generation of scholars whose fieldwork sites were concentrated in the south with groups outside of the major pastoralist lineages. Their work, informed by the disproportionate suffering and victimisation of these groups in the maelstrom of post-1991 violence, emphasised instead the social, linguistic, economic, ethnic and racial heterogeneity of the Somali territories. This approach often revisits the inherent divisions dismissed, ignored or suppressed by the post-colonial Somali nationalist project in an attempt to explain the prolonged nature of state-collapse, seemingly intractable conflict and the difficulties apparent in the reconstruction of a unitary Somali nation-state (Luling 1997; Kusow 2004; Hesse 2010; Eno et al 2010, Balthasar 2014). The modern salience of these post-independence discourses has been highlighted in Chapter 2’s discussion of the rebooting of potentially contested motifs (such as the pastoral *Maandeeq* idyll) by #Cadaanstudies academic activists.

Barnes’ argument emphasises heterogeneity and he issues a ‘call to take back the dominant framework of genealogy studies to local contexts’ (2006, 487). Although I agree that a more localised focus can yield valuable results, I instead position this contribution on discourses of division in the wider comparative frame. As Kapteijns (2004) emphasises, discourses of clan are never fixed or static, and they constantly engage with the broader history of Somali nationalist identity formation examined in previous chapters. To comparatively analyse modern discourses of ethno-nationalism (and associated critiques of ‘clanism’) does not equate to accepting any narrative of Somali homogeneity or the ubiquity and timelessness of a northern or pastoralist-centric paradigm of lineage relations. Instead, the objective here is to explore what is ‘rolled into’ narratives of division in this particular (and distinctive) post-2012 period of tangible political reconfiguration (*Ibid*, 4). The ongoing reconstruction of the Somali Federal Government thus gives warrant to research the ways in which nationalist discourses - in new forms of media - are being revived, utilised or altered from past configurations.

6.3. Genre and the media ecology

As its primary source base this chapter examines written print and digital polemical prose that circulates in the wider Somali public sphere of news media. As emphasised in first two chapters, the historical predominance of oral forms of literature and argumentation in Somali culture has long meant that written texts have been viewed as a less prestigious, less developed, and less widely disseminated mode of cultural production (Afrax 1987, 272). Samatar emphasises the pastoralist's traditional disdain for the written language and the importance placed in Somali poetry on effective memorisation and live performance: '[the pastoralist] is aware of his superiority to his urbanized countrymen in this respect [and] tends to ridicule literate people for being too dependent on written symbols as aids for remembering. They maintain, perhaps not without justice, that writing has a dulling effect on the mind' (1982, 32). The relatively recent formalisation of the Somali orthography, traditionally low literacy rates and the limited distribution of newspapers or books has historically limited the social penetration of written texts and maintained the prestige of oral poetic discourse.

Nevertheless, concerns over the preservation and continued vitality of the Somali language have long provoked intellectuals to advocate for the development and expansion of written literary and journalistic production. Such efforts can be traced back to figures such as Maxamed Daahir Afrax pioneering new forms of novelised fiction (1981) and written literary criticism in Barre-era newspapers (1987, 272), and are ongoing in the post-1991 context where political collapse and fragmentation has degraded the capacity of the state to promote and preserve the Somali language in education systems or national archives. Chapter three's discussion of the recent phenomenon of 'international book fairs' - led by Hargeysa and recently being adopted in Garoowe and Muqdisho - highlights the energies of both civil society and state-like administrations in the promotion of the written Somali language. Although these events serve as showcase for a much broader canon of oral literary culture, their emphasis on books illustrates the role that the preservation and development of written texts is imagined to play in the preservation of the Somali language itself.

Although vibrant print media exists or is emerging in the three research sites (as outlined in Chapter three) it is, arguably, the emergence of Somali cyberspace that has had the greatest impact on the modern use of written Somali political communication (Isse-Salwe 2008). Significant numbers of people are engaged in producing written content – often the type of opinion pieces or editorials discussed here – that discuss political developments across the Somali territories. The sheer number of websites that exist, and the frequent reproduction of content across multiple sites (and into print) indicates a popular demand for this type of writing. As elsewhere, profit margins for commercial journalism are slim, and this explains the circulation of content (with or without the permission of authors) and a frequent preference for sensationalist headlines – or 'clickbait' – to attract the online traffic that will generate advertising revenues. With this in mind, it has been noted that online platforms tend to facilitate the proliferation of 'diasporated' hate-speech and clan-based polemic (Osman 2015) that might offend significant segments of audiences in the wider Somali language

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

public sphere. Whilst this may at times be true, there remains a great diversity in the tone and intent of the texts explored in this chapter, as well as in the background and location of the writers. Furthermore, it is also important to note that the canon of poetic political discourse *also* includes ‘non-prestigious’ forms of oratory that Samatar characterises as ‘diatribe’, ‘provocation’ and ‘curse’ (1982, 74). It is not the purpose of this chapter to designate certain pieces as examples of ‘hate-speech’ or otherwise, but rather reflect on the ways in which the modern media environment facilitates different forms of political communication and the interplay of different types of texts. The pieces discussed here themselves draw on a much broader literary heritage of poetry and proverbs. These texts circulate alongside images, videos and advertisements which also play a role in structuring the media environment of which they are a part.

The intersection of multiple forms of content in the modern Somali written media ecology can be seen in different uses of the proverb quoted at the beginning of the chapter decrying the destructive nature of (clan) division. The renowned nationalist poet *Abwaan* Cabdilaahi Suldaan Maxamed Timacadde provided a distinctive contemporary commentary on the local and international context of colonial rule in Africa as well as the euphoria and difficulties of the post-independence era. Aside from introducing the vivid idiom of *Maandeeq*, the she-camel embodying national liberation and sustenance, the poet continuously tied the Somali struggle for independence into the wider world of colonial geopolitics³. Similar interplay between the local and global is evident in many of the texts explored below, and I have seen this particular proverb reproduced in written forms in the public sphere that range from polemical prose and civil society publications, to cartoons and university toilet cubicle graffiti. Recently, the line appeared on my *Twitter* news-feed, quoted by the Anti-Tribalism Movement, a Somali civil society organisation based in Somalia and in the diaspora, committed to ‘educating and raising awareness about the effects of tribalism [clanism] within communities’⁴. When I subsequently met ATM activists in London, they were busy preparing the distribution of prints of Amin Amir’s cartoons across different locations in Somalia as part of an ‘awareness raising’ initiative on the dangers of ‘tribalism’ in politics and society⁵. Once again, this illustrates the complex circulation and interplay of different texts in the Somali public sphere and their deployment by third parties for particular agendas.

Many of the writers of the texts explored below may consider themselves to be part of this wider Somali ‘civil society’, and similarly, many are located in the diaspora. However, instead of using this amorphous and contested notion of civil society sphere of organisation between the state and the family (Kasfir 1998; Lewis 2002) to conceptualise where these writings are coming from in the transnational Somali context, this analysis attempts to understand the position of these writers as

³ See Timacadde’s ‘*Wareeggii NFD*’ [The transfer of the Northern Frontier District]; ‘*Geesiga Madow – Baatriis Lamuumba*’ [Black Hero – Patrice Lumumba]; and ‘*Qabyo*’ [Division] compiled in Yuusuf Ducaale (2006).

⁴ <https://twitter.com/movementatm/status/651340855882706944>

⁵ Interview with Adam Matan (Managing Director) and Sagal Bafo, ATM Office, Shepherd’s Bush, London, 26 October 2016.

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

individuals contributing content into a vast and largely unregulated space of public sphere debate. Barber's approach to the analysis of 'tin-trunk' writings in African history – everyday texts, produced by 'ordinary' but often prolific individuals for public consumption and private archiving – is useful here in conceptualising what writings in the wider Somali public sphere 'do' (Barber 1997). Here one must consider not only the rhetorical point of the text itself, but the function the act of writing and disseminating serves for the author. In some instances the stereotype of the embittered man in the diaspora shouting into the online vacuum to vicariously 'recreate conflict' (Osman 2015) may well be accurate. In a different diasporic context, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie provides a stinging but poignant caricature of this type of character in her novel *Americannah*. She describes 'Nigerians in bleak houses in America' who despite their yearly ego-burnishing trips back to Africa 'fight on the internet over their mythologies of home, because home was now a blurred place between here and there, and at least online they could ignore the awareness of how inconsequential they had become' (2014, 117). Nonetheless, the diversity of backgrounds of the writers explored below should caution against sweeping generalisations. It should also invite greater attention to be paid to how and why texts circulate in the ways that they do, the particular ways and circumstances in which certain rhetorical tropes (clan, division, the Somali 'nation') are used, and the impact this has on a wider discursive environment and media ecology. In the rough 'Southern Somalia/Puntland/Somaliland' territorial categorisations of the texts (problematised and justified in Chapter two) many perspectives are left out. This chapter offers an overview of certain predominant and interacting discourses and – given the historical and contemporary sensitivity of many of these topics – it should go without saying that the inclusion of any argument does not equate to an endorsement or validation of any truth claim made within.

6.4. Lament in the capital: critiques of division from Muqdisho

Axmed Cabdihaaddi's article in Muqdisho's Xaqiiqa Times newspaper, entitled '*Maxaa dhacaya haddii lafeydo cowrada qabiilka?*' (What happens if clan is uncovered?)⁶, constitutes a cultural auto-critique of the conventions of clan discourse that are the subject of this chapter, and highlights the aura of taboo around mention of clan identities in the public sphere. This piece, from a young freelance journalist in Muqdisho (who also works in public relations for the Somali International University), is different from the other texts explored below in that it is a direct comment on the conventions of communication (or silence) around clan issues. Presented in a satirical fashion and adopting the analogy of the body politic, the writer describes clan as the 'genitals' of the Somali Ummah ('*cowrada qabiilka*'): a source of shame requiring concealment. He elucidates these tensions by arguing that whilst Somalis are careful not to mention clan directly in their speech, when conflict arises (or peacemaking, or distribution of resources) it becomes a primary point of reference to fall

⁶ Axmed Cabdihaaddi Cabdullaahi, Xaqiiqa Times newspaper, Muqdisho, March 10-23, 2015, '*Maxaa dhacaya haddii lafeydo cowrada qabiilka?*'

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

back to. Evocative of the metaphorical language of the *Deelley* poetic debates of 1979-1980 (Ahad 2015, 133) clan is described the burden camel that has escaped with its load and is in need of training ('*si awrkan buubaalka ah 'qabiilka' loo leyliyo*'). He describes this as a process which can only start with open debate about how people can live together. As it is the concealed nature of the discourse that 'makes sparks fly', he makes facetious calls for various steps to be taken: making one day of the year the 'day of the clan', where Somalis all over the Horn of Africa can recite literature, jokes and engage in open debate about clan; making it normal for clan to be read/spoken about in media and in education curricula; including clan in personal ID documents; and establishing a museum to store all of the customs of the Somali clans! The writer here uses humour to speak the tension that exists in social and political communication between the perceived ubiquity of clan identities and the parameters of debate which render so much unspoken.

In fact, and as the subsequent texts illustrate, much *is* in fact said in the public spheres of political communication. As such and in contrast to the above piece, it is rare to find contemporary political commentary as explicit in specific group identity presentation as the opinion piece 'Somali national identity and the problem suffered by the Hawiye!' by Caballah Salaad 'Kuugey', published on Keydmedia (a Muqdisho and diaspora-based website)⁷. The writer - based in the UK diaspora and founder of a cookie-cutter style Somali news website (Coomaad online) - begins his lament at the current state of Somali affairs (as so many others do) by recounting the fall of the military government of Siyaad Barre. He asserts that the various *Jadhadadii* freedom fighter groups (including the SSDF, SNM and USC) shared the same grievances against the regime, which fought back bringing suffering to innocent civilians. The polemic is premised on the idea that the 'Hawiye' (nominally embodied by the USC, and not internally differentiated) held fast to the idea of *Soomaalinimo* in the aftermath of state collapse, in contrast to the 'Isaaq' (SNM) and the 'Daarood' (specifically the Majeerteen-dominated SSDF) who pursued their own clan-region interests and cooperated with the Ethiopians to fulfil their goals. The writer asserts that the Hawiye were stuck in a situation of '*laba daran mid dooro*', having to choose between two bad options: abandonment either of clan or national interest. The writer argues that the ensuing conflict has led the *Ummad Soomaaliyeed* to believe that the Hawiye do not want governance, 'however, today it is as clear as daylight that it is *them* who do not want government, unity or Somali nationalism' (i.e. those accusers from other clans who make-up the Somali Ummah).

The piece specifically attacks the SSDF which it accuses not of affiliation to a shared *Daarood* identity, but rather a specific *Majeerteen* sub-clan solidarity ('*Majeerteenimo*') as shown by their alleged abandonment of their Daarood (Ogadeen) kinsmen fighting for freedom in 'Western Somalia' (*Soomaaliya Galbeed*, Zone 5 of Ethiopia, AKA the 'Ogaden' region). The writer draws a

⁷ Caballah Salaad 'Kuugey', Keyd Media online, August 2014, '*Soomaalinimada iyo dhibka kasoo gaaray Beesha Hawiye!*' http://www.keydmedia.net/editorial/article/soomaalinimada_dhibka_kasoo_gaaray_hawiye/ also reproduced on other websites such as: <http://www.shaaciye.com/site/?p=24809>

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

direct link between the SSDF and the formation of the state of Puntland which he describes as being led solely by the Maajeerteen to the exclusion of other groups. The SSDF interests were, he argues, literally ‘clanic’ (*danaha...beelaysan ah*) and the writer cites historical examples, clearly conflating SSDF identity with the Majeerteen: ‘they [the SSDF] were the first clan to kill a Somali president and the first to raise a foreign flag’⁸. This piece presents a seemingly monolithic Hawiye identity construct, while at the same time both disaggregating the agency of the Maajeerteen within the wider Daarood clan family, and playing a nationalist card attributing problems of political/clan division to the role of foreign interests. The tension between such an explicitly clan family construct-based narrative and the nationalist appeal on which it bases its legitimacy is particularly striking, however this is a characteristic of numerous other examples of rhetoric which single out particular groups for criticism of their allegedly divisive clan-inspired political manoeuvring.

The deployment of similar historical arguments in the context of current political intrigue can be seen in the reporting by the same website of a speech by Somali/Canadian peace activist and poet Maxamuud Siyaad Togane, quoted as stating that ‘it was the Daarood clan which destroyed the Somali’⁹. Togane is a controversial figure whose poetry has been criticised in the past for a confrontational and provocative style. Kapteijns (2012) asserts that this simply reflects his acknowledgement of the continued salience of clan-narratives of conflict¹⁰. Here, however, it is the mode of reporting of Togane’s speech, rather than that individual himself, that is the focus of analysis. The news story contains no details of the location or date of the speech, and the picture used of the speaker is not likely to have been taken from the event (it shows Togane apparently in Puntland, standing in front of a banner showing former Puntland President Faroole and the administration’s emblem).

Familiar historical events - such as the 1969 assassination of President Sharmaarke and the bombardment of Hargeysa - are attributed to (undifferentiated) Daarood protagonists and these are linked to the current political machinations of a clique known as the ‘Cakaara Action Group’ (English phrase used) who are described as ‘extremists who believe in clan ideology’ (*Koox xagjireen ah oo*

⁸ The writer here appears to be referring to two different historical events: firstly the assassination of President Cabdirashiid Cali Sharmaarke in 1969 by his bodyguard in Laas Caanood, an event which was followed shortly by the military coup which would bring Barre into power; and, secondly, the border war fought between Ethiopia (with SSDF support) against the Somali government which resulted in the brief capture of Somali territory in Mudug region by those forces.

⁹ The text equates ‘The Somali’ with Somalia as the nation state, which may or may not have been the intention of the speaker. Keydmedia, December 2014, ‘*Prof Togane yiri Soomaali waxaa baabi'iy Darood*’ [Prof. Togane says The Soomaali were destroyed by the Daarood]
http://www.keydmedia.net/news/article/prof._togane_yiri_soomaali_waxaa_baabi'iy_darood_-_cakaara_action_gr/

¹⁰ Togane has been outspoken and specific in other condemnations of other Hawiye clan-defined groups, for example see (pro-jihadi website) Voice of Somalia’s reporting (November 2013) of another Togane speech: ‘*Proff Togane: Habir Gedir iyo Abgaal dulmi ayay ku hayaan beelaha Biimaal iyo Jareer*’ (‘Prof. Togane: The Habir Gedir and Abgaal have oppressed the Biimaal and Jareer communities’)
<http://voiceofsomalia.net/2013/11/26/proff-togane-habar-gidir-iyo-abgaal-dulmi-ayay-ku-hayaan-beelaha-biimaal-iyo-jareer/>

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

rumeysana mabda' qabiil ah'). The speaker names allegedly prominent members of this group ('Daarood villains') and accuses them of gathering funds to bribe Members of Parliament in favour of the then embattled Prime Minister Cabdiweli Sheikh Axmed¹¹. In relation to the dispute between the President and this former PM in question (Cabdiweli Sheikh), other commentators reported the secretive financial role of this 'Cakaara' group in allegedly changing character of the contestation from 'political' to 'clan-based'. In this account the clan concept becomes a verb ('to clan-ify') illustrating not some primordial logic of clan-identification in political institutions, but rather the influence of money in *creating* a clan-based dynamic of contestation¹².

Although the accuracy of the reporting can easily be challenged - based as it is on anonymous sources ('People who know information') - this style of writing is illustrative of a public sphere in which conspiracy theories surrounding clan-cliques and factional intrigue are rife and find fertile ground for reproduction. Numerous interview respondents in Muqdisho (and elsewhere) demonstrated popular perceptions of political corruption at the centre of government, and with the absence of a tangible party system many are left to speculate on the role of various factional (clan-based or Islamist) associations who operate in the highly securitised corridors of power. The assassination of MPs has been a frequent occurrence in Muqdisho¹³ and whilst responsibility for such killings is usually claimed by AS, the wider Somali rumour mill is constantly alive with conspiracy theories of political intrigue and corruption.

Surveying broader perspectives on the political reconfiguration of Somalia, the points raised in another diaspora-based writer's opinion piece are characteristic of many of the arguments decrying the Federalisation project led from Muqdisho with the support of international backers¹⁴. Xaashi Yassiin Cismaan's lament of '*war wareeey!!*' amalgamates the vocabularies of clan, religion and cultural contestation in a call to action against foreign intervention and the division of Somalia, the image of which is presented with a metaphor of the human body and spirit. This body politic device is here initiated with the graphic description of a physical illness which is then linked to the fate of

¹¹ Since the TFG, the clan-power allocation convention of Muqdisho has tended to divide the positions of President, Prime Minister and Parliament speaker between the Hawiye, Daarood and Raxanweyne clan families. Xasan Sheekh Maxmuud's Presidency was characterised by conflict with the office of the Prime Minister and three individuals have been in the post since 2012.

¹² Radio WidhWidh, December 2012, '*Caakara Action Group oo hal milyan iyo 3 boqol kun dollar gaarsiisey CabdiWeli*' [The Cakaara Action Group delivers one million three hundred thousand dollars to Cabdiweli] <http://www.radiowidhwidh.com/widhwidhnew/Radio/2014/12/cakaara-action-group-oo-hal-milyan-iy-3-boqol-kun-dollar-gaarsiyyey-cweli/> (accessed January 20, 2016) '*Xildhibaan la hadlay Shabakada ayaa nasiib darro ku tilmaamay in la qabyaaladeeyo khilaafka Xasan Sheekh iyo Cabdi Weli Sheekh, oo ah mid siyaasad un ku dhisan*'. [The MPs spoken to by the news network described how, unfortunately, the dispute between Xasan Sheekh and Cabdi Weli Sheikh that was politically based was *clannified*' [my emphasis]]

¹³ Between 2014-2015 nine Somali legislators were killed either in targeted shootings or car-bombings or in complex attacks carried out on hotels. See United Nations Monitoring Group for Eritrea and Somalia, Report October 19 2015, p.13, for description of vote selling in Parliament (annexes including details redacted, 'strictly confidential') http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/801

¹⁴ Xaashi Yassiin Cismaan, December 2013 '*Waa wareeey!!*' <http://www.raxanreeb.com/2013/12/waa-wareeeyey-wq-xaashi-yaasiin-cismaan>

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

Somalia: he asks '*ma keligay baa ka haray bukaankii caalamka?*' ('Is it just me who has been left as the patient of the world?').

In describing the collapse of the Somali state, Cismaan employs the commonly heard description of the Somali nation of 'opening up' (or being taken apart - '*Markii Soomaalidu kala furfurantay...*'). Not only does this image fit with the earlier surgical metaphors but it captures the sense of vulnerability of *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed* to external manipulation or defilement that is emphasised in so many of the texts explored here. After this 'opening up' the writer asserts that everyone has reverted to the territory of their clan ('*degaanka rooxaantiisa (qabiilkiisa)*'). The use of *rooxaan* in this context is telling: its literal meaning is 'spirit' and this imbues the concept of clan genealogies with a metaphysical significance (for the body politic) which the writer returns to as he proceeds. The failure of the ubiquitous '4.5' system to facilitate agreement or reconciliation is described as inevitable, and the writer argues that if this *status quo* persists then the Somali nation will come to be known as the 'Somali countries', in same way that the 'Arab countries' are referred to collectively today. The use of global geopolitical comparisons is a common feature of many of these examples of political commentary. Accounts might reference, for instance, the break-up of Yugoslavia, the dispersal of the Kurdish population or the impact of the colonial Sykes-Picot agreement on the contemporary Middle East, consistently situating the Somali predicament in terms of external influence over a divided Somali ethno-nation¹⁵.

The homogeneity of this imagined community is set out in no uncertain terms in the writer's polemic: '*Soomaalidu waa ummad isku isir ah oo wadaagta taariikh, dhaqan, hidde, af iyo diin ba*' ('The Somalis are an Ummah of the same ancestry who share a history, culture, heritage, language and religion'). With *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed* so defined, the writer argues that it is this community that must build the nation and he re-invokes the body metaphor to argue that what is required is a 'central' nervous system to ensure state functionality, as opposed to a 'federal nervous system'. The writer specifically addresses religious scholars – clearly indicative of the importance he places on their role – and speaks to them about their shared experience (as Somalis) of clan. He attempts to explain the way in which different people orientate themselves towards or mobilise around clan: '*Waad og tihiiin, inaan kulligeen, haddaan Soomaali nahay, aan Rooxaan wada qabno. Laakiinse isku si nooma wada hayso*' ('You know that all of us, if we are Somali, engage with clan together. However, we do so in different ways'). He asserts that for 50% of people, their 'clanism' is accompanied by a lack of knowledge; 30% are bound by stubbornness; 15% are motivated by cruelty and only 5% of people are said to possess a 'pure' orientation to clan - without that malicious intent, intractability, or *Jahli*, the Arabic derived notion a pre-Islamic state of ignorance.

¹⁵ Dr Saciid Ciise Maxamuud (2017 Presidential Candidate, Founder of Daljir party) Caasimadda, July 2014 'Soomaaliya Wey Dhimanaysaa Ismana Oga' [Somalia is dying without it realising] <http://caasimadda.com/somalia-weey-dhimanaysaa-ismana-oga-shirqool-halis-ah-oo-loo-diyaariyey/>

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

Elsewhere, the writer develops the body-politic analogy further in describing the brain of the body as the government and nationalism, and the organs as what is traced from the ancestors (i.e. clan)¹⁶. The ‘cells’ of these organs represent individuals, and the ‘spirit of clan’ (*Rooxaan*) is described as the force which allows individuals to know which organ they form part of. ‘Charisma’ (*‘burji*’) in turn comes from the brain (the state) which allows each organ or cell to see each other. Clanism (*‘qaybyaalad*’) is the ‘virus’. In his allusion to the organs as genealogical constructs the writer employs a phrase derived from ‘knees and elbows’ (*‘sida jilibyahan iyo suxulyahan*’) which - lest the body metaphor become confused - refers not to body parts themselves but rather the semantic convention used to describe different levels of the genealogical system itself (see also *laf* [bone] as another sub-level in determining lineage). Physical imagery is pre-inscribed into the language of clan, a point I make not to emphasise any apparent primordialism of identification, but rather the possibilities existing for rhetorical devices to construct the *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed* as a tangible, quasi-biological whole in which clan is an integral social feature¹⁷.

The writer describes Puntland and Somaliland as bodily ‘organs’ which have broken away, albeit recognising their different positions vis-à-vis the reconstruction of the unitary state. Recalling how ‘organs’ represent clans in his schema, it is clear how the writer conceives of these political structures as simply clan-based projects. He argues that the recourse to historical borders (particularly, one assumes, by Somaliland) constitutes a revoking of the Somali body-polity and an embrace of the scars left by the ropes of the British and Italian colonialists (*‘...waxaa xad inoo ah haartii uu reebay xarigga gumaystayaashu (Ingiriis & Talyaani) ay xubnaha jirka Soomaaliga ku kala guntadeen*’). The writer criticises the naming of the Republic of Somaliland, rhetorically asking whether this ‘land’ really belongs to all Somalis regardless of lineage. This type of critique, where the language and vocabularies of the political spectrum are deconstructed, is common in these types of commentary and this reflects the discursive dynamism of the Somali political environment where every label and term is up for (re)definition and debate.

Cismaan’s polemics diagnose the malady of the Somali nation (patient) in terms of the ‘spirit’ of clan - presented as both at the root of the problem of institution building whilst at the same time an integral feature of the body polity. Certain aspects of identity of *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed* - anti-colonial history, culture, religion, language - are taken to be clear, self-evident and unproblematic. This effectively neutralises the dissent of those who might question this homogenous portrayal of nationalist lore and the construct of this ‘Somalia’ which is, the writer argues, to be saved by those righteous patriots not corrupted by the ignorance or malign intent of clan bias.

¹⁶ Xaashi Yassin Cismaan, Somalitalk, September 2007, ‘*War niman yohow Raggii meeye?*’ [Hey, where are the Men amongst you?] <http://www.somalitalk.com/2007/sept/20sep107.html>

¹⁷ Lewis (1994) certainly plays on this ‘primordialist’ imagery in his discussion of ‘Blood and bone: the call of kinship in Somali society’.

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

His discussion also addresses (linguistically, no less) certain minority groups defined by profession (caste) as opposed to race or ethnicity. He points out that the names of the major clan families are proper nouns and so cannot be pluralised: '*Niman Daarood ah [ma jiraan Daroodyo ama Daaroodyaal]*' (for example, 'the Darood Men, never 'Daroods' or the 'Darood's'), whereas for those groups defined by caste (he mentions the 'Midgaan'¹⁸, Tumaal and Yibir) their names are pluralised e.g. '*Niman Midgo ah*', as one would do for any modern profession. Cismaan goes on to argue that this stems from the ('brave, long-lineaged and un-skilled') pastoralists' disdain for craftsmen. Whilst this is but a side note to his argument, it illustrates the dominance of the (pastoral) lineage discourse both in the socio-political reality he alludes to, as well as in his own writing around the topic which itself designates 'clan' as an inalienable part of the 'Somali' body-politic.

Moving from the intangible to the nitty-gritty of state reconfiguration, it is a sign of the dominance of the federal project as a possibility for a Muqdisho-centred Somali government, that the very idea of federalism is conceptualised by other writers as a distinct form of political ideology in itself. Young diaspora returnee Adam Hajji Hussein ('Damase')'s October 2014 piece '*Qabyaalad Federaaleedka Soomaaliya*', explores the familiar trope of the clanic-divisiveness of federalism, but situates it within a historical lineage of other ideological experiments – colonialism, post-colonial procedural democracy, scientific socialism – which have 'scarred' *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*¹⁹. Employing examples from around the world, the writer differentiates between different models or degrees of federalism and argues that whilst a variant of the system might be beneficial for some places, cultural context (here defined by 'clan') makes it ill-suited to Somalia and open to abuse. He notes that those countries in which federalism might be successful are different to a Somalia, defined as it is by (implied) homogeneity of 'a country, a religion and a people'. The writer asserts that many things, such as 'clan, the internet and religion', have advantages and disadvantages, and can be used by different people for positive and malign ends. This selection of examples is telling. In describing factors influencing the Somali political environment, it presents the complexly intertwined social forces of clan-identification and Islam at a similar level of significance to the technological basis of the modern electronic public sphere.

Central to the political worldview of many critics of the state reconfiguration project is the notion that a federalised Somalia will, effectively, be absorbed into the federal system of an 'imperial' Ethiopia, ruled by a Tigray elite in power in Addis Ababa. Opinion pieces by such self-professed nationalists often emphasise the political identity of the 'regional' administrations and the motivations of 'shameless' politicians ('*Siyaasiyiin aan waxba ka xishooneynin*'), as opposed to referencing the

¹⁸ A pejorative and controversial term. '*Madhibaan*' referring to the same group is often felt to have fewer negative connotations. The writer's use of *Midgan* however reflects the continued pejorative currency of that term in Somali society.

¹⁹ Adam Hajji Hussein, Somalitalk, October 6, 2014 '*Qabyaalad Federaaleedka Soomaaliya*' [The Federal Division of Somalia] <http://somalitalk.com/2014/10/06/qabyaalad-federaaleedka-soomaaliya/>

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

clan identity of these administrations directly²⁰. In Cabdullaahi Ibraahim ('Gumeysi-Diid')'s account, Somaliland is denigrated to the same status as Puntland and other more recently emergent political entities - itself a pervasive rhetorical tool used by commentators to challenge Somaliland's legitimacy. The writer focuses on political protocol to make his argument and notes with disdain the endless series of visits by 'presidents' of various administrations (*'maamul hebel'*) to Addis Ababa to meet the Ethiopian leadership and 'take their orders'. The Puntland president, the writer states, has been to Muqdisho only once in an official capacity. Elsewhere the same writer specifically describes regional political structures as clan-based administrations (*'maamul bee'leed'*) and describes the state of relations with Ethiopia as an embarrassment even for those who are professed supporters of the Somali Federal Government. That this particular piece was republished by various sites, including those which usually take a pro-AS line, is indicative of the wide-ranging appeal of this type of rhetoric²¹. The whereabouts of this commentator – whose nickname means 'one who refuses colonialism' are unclear - although other pieces of his writing have appeared on the websites of Somaliland based newspapers, discussing specifically the question of Somaliland's recognition and the predicament of Somali 'unity'. In that case, the piece reproduced is likely to have been chosen for its controversial appeal to Somaliland-based (or aligned) readers and demonstrates the occasional ability of writers to publish anti-secessionist opinion pieces in Somaliland-orientated media²².

Other commentators describe the federalisation process as legalised clanism (*'waa qabyaaladii oo sharci loo helay'*) whereby certain groups attempt to take advantage of the ambiguous Provisional Constitution (adopted in 2012) in order to establish an administration which benefits them whilst other clans 'sleep'²³. The writer, Hassan A. Shire, notes that some of these groups are themselves 'waking up from this slumber' as the conflict over the creation of Jubaland and the Southwest administrations has illustrated. In this formulation, the federal project creates a regional zero-sum game, setting foundations for future conflict between 9 such entities and opening the country for exploitation of natural resources by foreigners. Here, colonial strategies of 'divide and rule' are referenced and place a broadly homogenous *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed* within a broader

²⁰ Cabdullaahi Ibraahim, Keyd Media 26 March 2015, '*Maamul Goboleedyadu ma Federaalka Itoobiya bay ka tirsan yihiin?*' [Are the regional administrations just part of Federal Ethiopia?] http://www.keydmedia.net/editorial/article/federaalkee_bay_ka_tirsan_yihiin_maamul_goboleedyada_itoobiya_mise_kan/

²¹ Cabdullaahi Ibraahim Cumar, Keyd media, 5 December 2014, '*Itoobiya oo Dalkii loo gacan geliyey!*' [Ethiopia has had the country put into its hands!] http://www.keydmedia.net/editorial/article/ethiopia_oo_somalia_relation_loo_gacan_geliyey/ see also: <http://voiceofsomalia.net/2014/12/06/itoobiya-oo-dalkii-loo-gacan-geliyey-gore-cabdullaahi-ibrahim-cumar/>

²² Cabdullaahi Ibraahim Cumar, Waaheen media (Hargeysa), 22 May 2014, '*Somaliland oo la aqoonsanayo iyo midnimo Soomaaliyeed oo khatar ku jirta*' [Recognition of Somaliland and the endangering of Somali unity] <http://waaheen.com/?p=28531>

²³ Hassan A. Shire, Xogta Media, April 15, 2014 '*Maamul Goboleedyada Somaalida: Boob Qabiil, Burbur Qaran, & Badheed Hub ururusi marlabaad*' [Regional administrations of Somalia: Clan looting, destruction of the nation, purposeful weapons stockpiling for the second time] <http://www.xogtamedia.com/2014/09/02/maamul-goboleedyada-boob-qabiil-burbur-qaran-badheed-hub-ururusi-marlabaad/>

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

imperial history of the carve-up of Somalia. Interestingly, although Shire's work appears on Southern-focused websites (and on a personal blog that prominently features the Timacadde proverb quoted above) this commentator is actually based in Somaliland and has worked for various civil society and humanitarian organisations, as well as a Hargeysa-based ministry. A very similar article – under a slightly different heading – was also reproduced in Somaliland-based media outlets, again demonstrating an overlap of content between different parts of the fragmented territory²⁴. Although this piece does not look favourably on 'regional administrations' anything that emphasises the continued instability of the south could be read with interest by Somaliland-based readers. The fact that Somaliland is not mentioned directly here is an ambiguity that could be read to strengthen the secessionist administration's case for pragmatic external recognition.

Another example of how cross-regional political commentary operates can be seen in Southern-focused media's quoting of well-known politicians from other political centres, particularly when the points made correspond with what may appear to be the editorial orientation of the commentator. Take, for example, Keydmedia's quoting of Faysal Cali Waraabe (leader of the third opposition party in the Republic of Somaliland) on his view that Nicholas Kay (UN Special Representative for Somalia) intended for the country to be administered from Garoowe²⁵. This illustrates not only this politician's high profile across the Somali political spectrum, but also the manner in which Somaliland is perceived by Muqdisho media as merely constituting another regional administration, also playing the game of state reconfiguration. Waraabe, well-known for his outspoken and often controversial opinions, is quoted here provocatively criticising the alleged impartiality of the UN and its support for the formation of Axmed Madoobe's Jubaland – a bias, he alleges, which serves the interests of the Puntland administration. These comments come from an observer who is himself hardly impartial (given the poor state of Somaliland's relations and occasional confrontations with Puntland) and feed into perceptions that there exists a national 'Daarood' political agenda, allegedly evidenced by the close relationship between the Puntland and Jubaland administrations, and their attempts to constrain (Hawiye) power in Muqdisho.

Puntland's playing of the federalisation game is discussed in more detail and with more explicit reference to clan identifications in Cabdiqaadir Maxamed Cismaan's piece entitled 'Puntland's divorce comes before the marriage!'²⁶. This writer, who works for a university in

²⁴ Hassan A. Shire, Bandige.com, August 11, 2015 '*Maamul-goboleedyada Soomaalida: astaan burbur qaranimo*' [Regional Somali governance: a sign of the destruction of nationhood] <http://bandhige.com/maamul-goboleedyada-soomaalida-astaan-burbur-qaranimo-w-q-xasan-cabdi-shire/>

²⁵ Keyd Media, August 20, 2014 '*Dhageyso: Faysal Cali "Nikolas Kay waxuu rabaa in Soomaaliya laga maamulo Garoowe"*' [Listen: Faysal Cali: 'Nicholas Kay wants Somalia to be governed from Garoowe'] http://www.keydmedia.net/news/article/soomaalilandnikolas_kay_waxaa_uu_wadaa_danaha_puntlanddhag_eyso/

²⁶ Cabdiqaadir Mamaxed Cismaan, Rajo News, August 3, 2014 '*Puntlaaneey in la isfuro waxaa ka horeeysa in horey la isu qabay*' <http://rajonews.com/2014/08/03/puntlaaneey-in-la-isfuro-waxaa-ka-horeeysa-in-horey-la-isu-qabay/>

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

Malaysia and is active in diaspora politics, has published articles in a wide range of southern focused news websites. He addresses Puntland here with the suffix one would use to call a female acquaintance, and describes the administration as having broken off relations with the Somali Federal Government that didn't exist in the first place. The writer is referring to Puntland President Gaas's 'official' suspension of links with the Muqdisho SFG in July 2014 after the latter's signing of an agreement on the establishment of the Galmudug state (Puntland controls the northern half of Mudug region and rejects its integration into a separate Galmudug regional state). The writer here mocks the Gaas administration's stance by claiming that the previous Puntland President (Faroole) had broken off relations the previous year which had not since been reinstated. This type of parody of the external relations of the various regional administrations (or 'clan administrations' – '*maamul beeleed*' as the writer puts it here) is common in a context where multiple political authorities at different stages of administrative development are attempting to assert themselves through the trappings, iconography and conventions of legitimate 'state' power.

A highly euphemistic portrayal of political-clan power projection across different regions is also at work here. The writer talks about former President Faroole's various trips around and beyond Somalia (to Kismaayo or Zone 5 in Ethiopia) in order to stir conflict or build clan-based coalitions. The attention paid to movements of 'regional presidents' is noted above, and it is popular knowledge that political elites are very frequently in air transit between the various islands of administrative control around southern Somalia. Often the airports in question are secured by AMISOM forces and they serve as important and visible sites of political performance, frequently featured in news media covering the welcoming ceremonies and pageantry that accompanies such visits. As road travel is usually unfeasible for politicians, regional airports have become important strategic and politically resonant locations where interface occurs between various power holders in each context: politicians, loyal local security forces, UN functionaries and offices, AMISOM troops etc. Like hotels, airports are prominent in popular imaginations of the securitised loci of power and authority across Somalia.

Whilst the writer makes reference to geographically defined communities, his liberal use of inverted commas suggest that these simply serve as euphemisms for clan affiliations. He discusses the reaction of politicians of '*Beesha Garoowe*' (The Garoowe clan/community, i.e. Puntland) to the SFG's appointment of a previous '*Reer Gedo*' ('Gedo region people') Prime Minister (Cabdiweli Sheikh Axmed), and makes reference to the clan militia of *Raskaami* [sic], who have taken control of Kismaayo and have become the basis of the Jubaland project. Although the writer is explicitly dealing with clan-politics, he avoids clan names altogether and instead relies on territorial definitions for the different Daarood groupings: whether the Majeerteen sub-clans represented by the Garoowe politicians, a Marexaan Prime Minister or the Ogadeen Ras Kaambooni militia. Clearly, this rhetorical strategy (which allows the writer to be both rather specific in his condemnations without having to

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

break taboos of naming specific sub-groups in the public sphere) assumes and depends on the audience's geographical conceptualisation of clan territoriality. Such arguments could be seen to be both reflecting and further reinforcing the wider shift towards territorial focus in clan-based claim making discussed by Cassanelli (2015) and Hoehne (2015, 2016). As this type of commentary in the public sphere uses presentations of territory as shorthand for clan (avoiding the taboo of clan-naming), this reaffirms the importance of geographical-historical arguments for legitimising settlement, conflict or power relations. With legacies of civil war violence left disputed and unresolved, and the boundaries of modern Somalia still very much up for debate, the further 'fixing' of particular groups in particular places is both problematic and politically contentious.

This discursive process can likewise be identified in the final piece I examine in this selection of 'southern' arguments. This article, entitled 'Who is instigating the fighting in the Shabelle [regions]'²⁷, discusses conflict between the Habir Gedir sub-clan of the Hawiye and the Biimaal (Dir). Although it employs far more direct clan language than the previous piece, it also taps into similar rhetorical themes surrounding historical and contemporary genealogical identification with territory. Although the writer of the piece, Axmed Sheekh Maxamed is listed as Suldaan (clan leader) of the Habir Gedir (Hawiye) sub-clans in Merka, he does not have a particularly high profile and his actual position to speak on behalf of any group is questionable. He is not one of the 135 elders chosen in 2016 to undertake the selection of electors for the new Parliament and was not part of the Merka committee of elders which emerged the previous year. This is indicative of frequent controversy over the profusion of competing elders and 'traditional' leaders, often emerging in the context of seat allocation and political representation.

Nevertheless, considered as an individual commentator, the writer describes the immediate parties to the conflict as two 'brotherly' clans, and makes an appeal to objective truth telling. His list of purported facts concerns the historical presence of the Habir Gedir in the region as pastoralists, farmers and political functionaries for over 15 generations, and he rhetorically asks as to how a people with history in the town (Merka) and the region can be said to be migrants who have not been born in that area. This claim to autochthony is intended to refute the notion that the Shabelle regions faced an influx of Habir Gedir migrants following the fall of Barre's regime in Muqdisho and the subsequent move of Hawiye militias through the south, displacing 'traditional' inhabitants. The article goes so far as to portray the Habir Gedir as the victims of a history of 'hunting' perpetrated by other external figures including warlords such as Axmed Madoobe (now in control of Kismaayo and the Jubaland administration), those from Bari region (meaning Puntland) and those penetrating the country from Ethiopia. The writer emphasises the importance of media broadcasting and alleges that '11 websites' have been set up which, although claiming to be located in the Shabelles, are actually based in Bari (Puntland) and are committed to spread lies and propaganda. In essence, the piece represents an

²⁷ Axmed Sheekh Maxamed, Keyd Media online, June 14, 2014 'Dagaallada Shabeellaha yaa hurinaya?' http://www.keydmedia.net/editorial/article/dagaallada_shabeellaha_yaa_hurinaya/

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

attempt to draw focus away from the localised conflict to a broader conspiracy of geographically removed actors who have an (alleged) interest in stoking up conflict near to Muqdisho. The writer attacks the Daarood clan in the broadest terms. This condemnation includes those (like Axmed Madoobe's Ogadeen sub-clan) who 'illegally/improperly' control Kismaayo (*xaaraan ku haysta*), and the Majeerteen in Bari (Puntland), whose involvement in sowing 'provocation and disorder' (*faduul iyo fidno*), he argues, is 'surprising' given their lack of 'territory or people' in the Shabelle regions.

The writer seeks to undermine the same Daarood solidarity he describes, by remarking on the Majeerteen's betrayal of their Ogadeen cousins to the Ethiopians (see also Caballah Salaad's piece quoted above). He then goes on to question the actual genealogical construction of the conflict in challenging the notion that the Biimaal are actually part of the Dir clan-family. This assertion plays into the writer's wider perception of clan conspiracy involving the Isaaq, associated with Somaliland. The writer presents this group as being in league with the Dir (The Isaaq are often categorised as forming part of the broad Dir 'clan-family') and alleges their involvement in the Shabelle conflict, and wider Muqdisho politics as a means to prevent state building in the south and advance the interests of '*Isaaqland*' (Somaliland). The writer employs the colourful description of Isaaq MP's (for him 'secret agents' of Somaliland) sitting around in hotels in Muqdisho plotting against Somali unity. He also describes the other external actors involved in the conspiracy, all of whom are benefiting in one way or another from the conflict: AS which takes advantage of clan tensions, Ethiopia which has historically brought problems for the *Qowmiyad Hawiye* (Hawiye 'nation/ethnicity'); Kenya which relishes conflict in the Shabelles to draw attention away from their client/proxy state in the Jubas, and finally the SFG itself, embodied by the former PM Abdiweli who is biased against one of the parties (the Hawiye/Habir Gedir).

Although this piece constitutes an extreme and convoluted form of clan-conspiracy based argumentation in a southern-focused public sphere, it nonetheless shares many rhetorical features with the other texts cited above. Different vocabularies, idioms or euphemisms of clan interplay with nationalist tropes of Somali cultural, religious or linguistic homogeneity in the face of externally manipulated political fragmentation. In order to examine how similar vocabularies are used for different political objectives, the analysis now turns to critical narratives emanating from Puntland around federalism and the wider Somali political environment.

6.5. Puntland: arguing an ambiguous autonomy

Perspectives from Garoowe on the reconfiguration of a federal Somalia are presented quite differently to those articulated in the Muqdisho public sphere. Garoowe represents a more homogenous political space than the sprawling and conflicted capital, and Puntland itself is administered by state structures and institutions which, for all their limitations, exert a degree of coherent authority across the major towns of the region that would be the envy of power-holders in Muqdisho. These different political/security contexts are evident in material being produced in the Puntland public sphere and in

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

presentations of its position vis-à-vis the embryonic federal Somalia and various other contesting actors, notably Somaliland.

Cabdiqaadir Muuse Yuusuf's commentary in the *Ilay*s newspaper 'The future of Puntland after 2016: ongoing change and effects' situates the administration in the context of federalisation and the 'Vision 2016' roadmap²⁸. This schema of the SFG and its international backers aimed to manage the end of President Xassan's term and facilitate a transition of power via a national selection process through the new regional states. Regarding the redrawing of the political map of Somalia, the writer (himself a former Puntland deputy minister) describes the 'most recent' formulation of federal regions, which he claims are based on the 'natural distribution of the population of Somalia' (*'sida dabiiciga ah ee ay bulshada u kala degto deegaanka dhulka Soomaaliya'*). This federal Somalia would thus be constituted of the following territories (quoted here with my emphasis on those territories that would be disputed by Somaliland [points 1,2] or a Galmudug administration [point 3]):

1. The administration of *western* Somaliland (Awdal, Waqooyi Galbeed, Togdheer, *western* Sanaag)
2. Puntland Administration (Bari, Nugaal, Sool, *north* Mudug, *east* Sanaag and *district of Buhoodle*)
3. Central Administration (Shabelle Dhexe, Hiiraan, Galgaduud, *south* Mudug)
4. Southwest Administration (Bay, Bakool, Shabelle Hoose)
5. The Jubas and Gedo

This configuration of regions represents the optimal result for Puntland and it is clear that the 'natural' order of population distribution referred to by the writer is based on the clan make-up of these territories, as opposed to any other geographic or economic consideration, or earlier colonial boundary. North Mudug is dominated by the Cumar Maxamuud sub-clan of the Majeerteen (Daarood) whilst southern Mudug is home primarily, but not exclusively, to Habir Gedir (Hawiye) sub-clans. Neither population (according to politicians) would be willing to be governed by an administration perceived to be dominated by the other. Thus, a quandary exists given that the ambiguously worded Provisional Constitution, does not allow for the splitting of existing administrative regions, regardless of the actual political reality on the ground - quite clear in the town of Gaalkacyo, on this border and split between two administrations. The writer suggests that the regional configuration he claims was already laid out has been 'altered'. He argues that the objective of a Central (Galmudug) Administration (backed by the President but not the former PM Cabdiweli who 'lawfully showed the borders of Puntland' and was thus removed from office) would require both military and financial force, bringing with it the risk of civil war.

²⁸ Cabdiqaadir Muuse Yuusuf 'Gentleman', *Ilay*s newspaper, Garoowe, February 16 2015, '*Mustaqbalka Puntland 2016-ka ka dib: Isbedeladda socda iyo saamayntooda*'.

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

Looking west, the writer discusses political developments and potential changes of regime in Somaliland in the wider context of federalisation, and notes (albeit in vague terms) the destabilizing influence that Somaliland will have over this national process. He echoes a fear of Puntland's marginalization often heard in popular discussion of negotiations between Somaliland and the SFG. As a non-secessionist but functional federal state, Puntland finds itself in a dilemma over its position towards such negotiations. It has strained relations with both sides that can manifest in military posturing and open conflict with Somaliland and a relatively frequent severing of ties with the SFG. However, it has no seat at the table where the relations between 'The Federal Government of Somalia' and 'The Republic of Somaliland (or, from the SFG side, the prospects of reintegration) are discussed. For this reason commentators in Puntland remain wary of any concessions that the SFG might be prepared to make to Somaliland at its expense, but at the same time are bound to a position that supports Somali 'unity'.

Consequently, the Puntland press is often inclined to side with the SFG position, as demonstrated in an anonymous March 2015 piece in the Kaaha Bari newspaper condemning a Somaliland delegation's walkout of talks held in Turkey (after their objection to the inclusion of certain Isaaq politicians on the SFG side)²⁹. The article reflects the diplomatic discourse of the protagonists themselves and does not mention the shared clan-family backgrounds of the four individuals named as being objected to by the Somaliland delegation. They are referred to instead as being 'from Somaliland' and the words of the Somaliland foreign minister used in rejecting these individuals' participation epitomise Somaliland's portrayal of itself in clear nationalist as opposed to clan-based terms. The article asserts that the 'obstruction' of talks represents the continuation of Somaliland's policy of '*Soomaalidiidnimo*': the 'rejection of Somali [unity]', given noun status here in the same way that its more common antonym (*Soomaalinimo*) is.

Commentary in Puntland on the reconfiguration of the Somali state is also often focused on events further beyond its borders, particularly the goings-on of power holders in Muqdisho. One narrative in Puntland surrounding political violence in the capital – particularly the assassination of MPs – holds that the Daarood have been disproportionately affected. Commentators have argued that this is indicative of a conspiracy by Hawiye political elites (the former President of the SFG and his string-pullers in the Dam Al Jadiid clique) to use the deterioration of security conditions for their own political ends, for example, to facilitate the extension of the President's term or change the relative balance of power in Muqdisho itself. The killing in July 2014 of MP Saado Cali Warsame, a former singer famous for the role her work came to play in opposition to Barre's military regime, sparked a national outcry but also was taken as evidence from some commentators, particularly in Puntland, of a conspiracy against Daarood politicians in Muqdisho.

²⁹ Kaaha Bari newspaper, March 6, 2015, '*Somaliland caqabad ku noqotay wadahadalka ay dowladda Somalia Turkiga kula yeelan laheyd*' [Somaliland obstructs talks with Government of Somalia which were to take place in Turkey]

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

Pieces such as Muuse Xaji Abees's 'Strong warning to Daarood MPs' were addressed primarily to a clan-defined audience but also to 'all those who love Somali unity', clearly framing the presentation of a sectional issue in the wider terms of Somali nationalism³⁰. This writer played a role in the formation of Puntland in 1998 and subsequently spent several years in the diaspora before returning to Somalia in 2014. The article called on Daarood MPs to leave Muqdisho (as there was 'no doubt' that Saado had been killed by forces loyal to the President Xasan 'Culusow'³¹) and flee to areas of peace and companionship in Puntland and Jubaland - the clan-based nature of this welcome being fully conveyed by the title and the blanket address to the whole Daarood clan-family.

A reassertion of conspiracy narratives followed attacks on the Central and Makka Al Mukarama hotels in Muqdisho in February and March 2015 in which up to 35 people were killed, including, it was argued by some commentators, a high number of Daarood political figures (such as the ambassador to Switzerland Yuusuf Maxamed 'BariBari'). A piece such as '*Muuq-disho*' by the prolific and diaspora based writer Ahmed Yusuf Ahmed on Dunida Online, plays on the name of the city in question as an 'image of killing', and uses various other puns and wordplay to portray a collusion between AS ('*Al Habaab*'/'the lost') and the Dam Al Jadiid faction (here '*Dulmi Jadiid*' or the 'new oppression') to advance the political agenda of the President³². Whilst the polemic is high on emotive rhetoric and low on evidence to substantiate the claims made, it does epitomise the discourse around the distinction between 'home' territory for politicians coming to Muqdisho (also seen above in Abees's piece), and the role of 'guests', who, as the latter writer alleges, may show more inclination for 'cannibalism' than hospitality.

Given what Kapteijns describes as the early 1990s 'clan-cleansing' (2012) of the Daarood from Muqdisho, it is perhaps unsurprising to see certain Puntland narratives on modern violence in the capital framed in terms of clannic conspiracy. Territorial considerations around security and the theories of unseen agency that they engender can proliferate amongst a wider public with a heightened sense of where they may or may not feel safe in Somalia. Such personal considerations were noted by many different informants across the different territories especially when recounting their expectations or experiences when travelling, usually in a professional capacity or 'returning' from the diaspora. The sharp divides of political space observable in these public sphere texts from Puntland can also be discerned from news media and commentary in the Republic of Somaliland, which is where the discussion – still focusing on the vocabularies or parameters of clan debate – now turns.

³⁰ Muuse Xaji Abees, *Dunida Online*, July 20, 2014 '*Digniin culus ku socota xildhibaanada daarood*' <http://www.dunidaonline.com/index.php?id=12999>

³¹ A derogatory nickname for the President – ('Heavy Xasan')

³² Ahmed Yusuf Ahmed, *Dunida Online*, March 29, 2015 '*Muuq-disho*': <http://dunidaonline.com/index.php?id=14345>

6.6. Somaliland: claim-making and the ‘other’ country

Journalism in Hargeysa reflects the distinct political environment of the Republic of Somaliland and also plays a significant role in the production narratives of independence. If one was to rely solely on Hargeysa’s ten plus newspapers for news of Somalia it would be difficult to discern any substantive federal reconfiguration taking place as it is a subject rarely covered in any specific detail. Although the daily happenings of Somaliland’s vibrant political scene provide more than enough copy for Hargeysa’s journalists to fill their pages, the amount and scope of news covered from Somalia – that ‘other’ country – plays an important role in the self-definition of Somaliland as an entirely separate political space. The notion that Somalia remains mired in endemic bloodshed is a part of the political imagination of many Somalilanders. This is true for writers who cover events from the south with particular focuses: namely political violence, the continued role of AS, or SFG statements, negotiations or ceremonies which question the sovereign integrity of Somaliland. In this context, detailed discussion of federalisation is undesirable, in that its mere mention could be taken to suggest that it is a process in which Somaliland has a stake, thus raising the possibility of its integration into this framework. The ‘official’ slogan of Somaliland’s 2015 May 18th Celebrations (Somaliland’s anniversary of its 1991 declaration of independence) demonstrates the importance of policing narratives around secession and vigilance against discursive openings for counter-claims: *‘Dalkayga doodi kama furna’* (‘My country is not open for debate’)³³.

Where events in Somalia are covered, they are often portrayed through a long historical lens emphasising past conflict (with allusions of continuity in the present day) and downplaying significant political change in Muqdisho. A piece in the Ogaal newspaper (also widely circulated online) entitled ‘The Muqdisho Government: follow the bravery of the Somaliland heroes?’ epitomises this type of historical contextualisation of contemporary events³⁴. Writing under the pen-name ‘Weli Cabsiye’, the commentator breathlessly addresses the prospect of AMISOM tanks lining up on Somaliland’s border, following discussion that month about the possibility of a contingent being transferred north to Puntland to assist in the fight against AS there. The piece makes clear the ferocity of military resistance that would be faced by such a move, and notes the history of the SNM’s struggle against the Barre regime. Leaving aside the fact that this AMISOM deployment was unlikely to occur due to intense opposition from the Puntland government itself, it is instructive that the African Union Forces are portrayed as proxies for the SFG. This stands in contrast to the conception commonly put forth by southern commentators that they are the agents of foreign interference or ‘colonialism’. Here the writer compares the current situation of Somaliland (possessing a government, flag and population not prepared to allow for a deterioration of the security situation in the Horn) with that of Muqdisho: *‘Xamar hadii maanta ay gubanyaso Somaliland hore ayey u soo gubatey’* (‘If Muqdisho burns today,

³³ Ogaal newspaper, Hargeysa, April 30, 2015, *‘Hal ku dhigga sanadkan’* [This year’s slogan].

³⁴ Weli Cabsiye, Ogaal newspaper, Hargeysa, May 5, 2015, *‘Dawlada Xamar: Dib u raac taarikhda geesiyada Somaliland?’*

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

[remember] that Somaliland was on fire before'). Although the situations facing modern Muqdisho and Hargeysa in the late 1980s are incomparable (in terms of the nature or scope of the political violence unleashed), the writer's nationalistic fervour is characteristic of many such discussions which repeatedly link all contemporary developments with Somaliland's struggle for independence and troubled historical relationship with the south. In this mode of argumentation, the political entity of Somalia lies firmly in the past, and in defining its territory mention is often made to the regions *that were once referred to* as part of Somalia ('*gobollada dalkii Soomaaliya la isku odhan jiray*'³⁵).

Compared to Muqdisho or Garoowe, it is much less common in the Hargeysa public sphere to see rhetorical strategies that reference 'macro' narratives of clan-family political agency, or – that flip side of the same coin – appeals to political *Soomaalinimo* nationalism. The absence of the latter is hardly surprising for a polity which defines itself as a 'Somali' political entity, but is positioned in terms of regional independence from multiple other 'Somali' spaces of governance. Indeed, the very existence of Somaliland demonstrates the failure of the historical project of pan-Somali nationhood (or irredentism) often embodied in the deployment of the *Soomaalinimo* discourse³⁶. Conversely, with regard to 'macro' narratives of clan, it is important to consider the ways in which the Somaliland political project has (and has not) attempted to legitimise itself and the effect that this has had on discourses in the public sphere. Although the SNM movement and nucleus of post 1991 state-building was predominantly driven by Isaaq sub-clans, the Somaliland state has consistently attempted to portray itself (in self presentation, and, to an extent, in practice) as a multi-clan polity that makes no distinction based on the clan identity of its citizens. Somaliland is home to sizeable Dir and Darood populations (to the west and east of the Isaaq heartlands respectively) and political development has led to many non-Isaaq sub-clans being co-opted into elite politics³⁷. An appreciation of the importance of the multi-clan identity and rhetoric for the Somaliland project helps explain the symbolic (as well as real-politick or resource-linked) importance of the disputed regions of Sool and Sanaag. Were these territories ever to be lost either to a local political challenger or a Puntland administration (which imagines its territorial scope as corresponding with the 'natural' distribution of the Harti Daarood sub-clans) then this would undermine the identity of Somaliland as a multi-clan polity and allow external critics to advance the claims (that they already make) of Isaaq hegemony in a clan-state project.

In early public expressions of Somaliland nationalism, visual appeals were made to colonial history - including even the use of British insignia and the Protectorate flag itself - presumably as a

³⁵ Himilo newspaper, Hargeysa, March 25, 2015, 'Interview with Head of Somalia Immigration'.

³⁶ The very naming of Somaliland is itself an appeal to an ethno-nationalist legitimacy (just one that rejects the possibility of a wider political organisation for Somalis). It is also important to recall here the naming of Puntland - chosen over 'Harti-land' – as a non-clan-based label appealing for credibility within the context of contemporary peace negotiations, one which also conjured up a historical image of territorial-political coherence (which, in fact, had not previously existed). See Hoehne 2009, Marchal 2010).

³⁷ Somaliland's second president, Daahir Riyaale Kaahin, for example, hailed from the Gadabuursi community (Dir).

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

means to express the idea of a legitimate territorially-defined polity populated by multiple clans³⁸. During my time in Hargeysa since 2009 I have not witnessed the use of such direct imagery relating to the colonial power, indicative no doubt of a reconsideration by actors of the desirability of employing such foreign iconography, or following the realisation that the former colonial power was not going to lead any efforts to push for Somaliland's international recognition. Nevertheless, the historical juridical existence of Somaliland's independent borders at the moment of decolonisation remains a key factor in the discourse surrounding recognition. This forms part of a wider legalist and normative-democratic narrative that frames legitimate statehood both for citizens and a watching 'international community'. Within the public sphere there is little perceived legitimate space for arguments referencing (directly, at least) 'macro'-conceptions of clan-family contestation across the former territories of Somalia. This is not to say that the events that brought about the emergence of the Somaliland state (i.e. the marginalisation and suppression of the north by the Barre regime) are never framed in the context of clanism, but rather that this idea is presented in contrast to the political modernity that Somaliland is imagined to represent in the Somali Horn of Africa.

If Somaliland is presented by its supporters as an escape from a past characterised by centralised (southern) control and an institutionalised and authoritarian clanism, then the spectre of this 'clanism' exists within public sphere discourses *inside* the Somaliland political project as a prevalent and powerful rhetorical tool with which to contest political developments or critique the action of power-holders. Charges of clanism are common in political commentary and frequently find voice around contentious issues, such as the dispute in 2015 which embroiled the three political parties, the *Guurti* (upper house of legislature, made up of 'traditional' elders) and the National Electoral Commission, over the proposed extension of President's Siilaanyo's mandate and the setting of a new election date.

Writing by individuals such as Maxamed Sadiiq (Youth wing spokesman of the opposition Wadani party) was characteristic of many of the rhetorical blows traded by commentators in the Hargeysa political milieu³⁹. Sadiiq's piece addresses the leader of the *Guurti* (Saleban Gaal) directly and questions material reward and the 'curse' of clan in his position taken to authorize the delaying of the Presidential election. The writer, taking a highly lyrical style, is strong on rhetorical flourishes painting the *Guurti* leader's decisions as being tainted by clan-bias, whilst at the same time staying well clear of any specific charges or naming of particular (clan) groups. The writer relies here on his audience's popular understanding of the various clan-loyalties that can be ascribed to various named actors, thus creating the space in which the simple and generalised charge of pandering to clan or

³⁸ Personal communication and photos shown to me by Markus Hoehne.

³⁹ Maxamed Sadiiq, *Ogaal* newspaper, April 30, 2015, '*Saleebaanoow ama Soomaalilaand baad abaal marin ama saarka qabiilka*' [Saleebaan! You will either reward Somaliland or the clan spirits]

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

‘particular’ interests can gain rhetorical traction (The President and *Guurti* leader are from the same Maxamed Abokor lineage of the Habar Jeclo sub-clan of the Isaaq)⁴⁰.

Couched amongst the nationalist rhetoric of fidelity to the wishes of the Somaliland population and the oblique accusations of sectional interest, lies a criticism of the *Guurti* for their failing to give a specific reason for its authorization of the postponement of the election, beyond the fact that the *previous* government had been granted one. Aside from the abstract rhetoric of clanism, what comes through clearly in this piece is an idealised conception of the ‘spirit’ of the institution in question. Embodied in the writer’s use of the term *Guurtinimada* (again, so concrete it is made a noun), is the notion that this ‘house of traditional elders’ has in the past fulfilled the function of moderating political competition, exemplifying neutrality and the importance of the ‘middle ground’. This institution, based as it is on a logic of ‘traditional’ (i.e. clan) representation, is simultaneously imagined to have the potential (and proven track record) of ameliorating clan-based conflict or special interests in the name of the Somaliland *Ummah*.

Given the attention that has been given to the institution by scholars of ‘hybrid’ political orders (Renders 2012, Hoehne 2013) it is useful to consider the way in which the very aura, uniqueness and perceived past successes of this institution play into Somaliland’s own nationalist and state-making mythology. It demonstrates how popular conceptualisations of clan-based order, and ‘traditional’ mechanisms of socio-political representation are not seen to contradict that other potentially negative side of the equation: the logics of clan affiliation and bias. Although this does not inoculate the institution against criticism - as Sadiiq’s attack and other commentary in the public sphere highlight - the example does illustrate the way in which the hybridity emphasised in the political science literature on such legislative bodies is also discernable in imaginations of its political legitimacy in the Hargeysa public sphere of political argumentation.

6.7. Conclusion

Returning to Barber’s (2007) conceptualisation of texts, the analysis above has highlighted some aspects of what opinion pieces say, do and are in the wider Somali media ecology. Discourses around clan or clanism in written polemics across the public sphere are characterised by a dialectical construction of clan logic as both constitutive of and detrimental to ‘Somali’ political culture. These texts often say that clanism is primary driver of political fragmentation through key points of historical reference - the archetype being state collapse itself. At the same time, certain conceptions of clan-affiliation are presented as being fundamental to a broadly homogenised cultural identity of *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*. In this construction, clan becomes the foil off which play the competing yet also ‘culturally’-grounded tropes of nationalism and Islam. These are presented as remedies to seemingly inevitable political malaise, creating malleable space for multiple discourses of ‘Somali’

⁴⁰ International Crisis Group Report, October 5, 2015 ‘Somaliland: the strains of success’.

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

political organisation or critique of existing power-holders, conceptualised across administrative boundaries of a supra-national community.

As for what these texts ‘do’, the analysis above provides examples of how certain ‘macro’ narratives of clan contestation may be used to deflect focus away from local dynamics of conflict onto broader political conspiracies and a wide range of geographically dispersed but interested actors. Alternatively, we see how various rhetorical strategies of non-naming or geographical euphemism allow commentators to make clan-based arguments. These rely on readers’ assumed fluency in such coding, and level the generalised charge of ‘clanism’ in what are, essentially, themselves clan-based polemics. Here the cyclical nature of the rhetoric is obvious: the logic of clan is reaffirmed in the very argumentation that decries its influence on politics. Often narratives of clan affiliation are presumed in such arguments at the expense of more in-depth discussion of alternative (or complementary) motivations for political agency, whether these include capture of state resources or other private economic interests.

These texts also constitute part of a modern Somali media ecology that is often dominated by transnational (though not necessarily solely diasporic) producers, and characterised by the circulation and reproduction of written content across multiple different forums. The analysis has highlighted some of the ways in which texts and narratives ‘travel’ across and between media platforms focused on the different territories. This is a process that itself contributes to the maintenance of an overarching and global Somali public sphere of political debate. Furthermore, the sheer amount of polemic prose across print and online news media indicates that producers and consumers view written forms of the language as being important, and such writings frequently draw on a wider literary canon of more ‘prestigious’ texts including poetry and proverbs. This speaks to Chapter three’s observations on the role that journalists are imagined to play in processes of linguistic, cultural and social development, and is also evident in the efforts of ‘civil society’ and public intellectuals (categories that some of the writers discussed above might fit into) in promoting the written language through initiatives such as the ‘international book fairs’ phenomenon. Politically, it is no coincidence that these events have emerged in the three administrative centres focused on in this thesis, and elements of competition over the apparent guardianship of the Somali literary tradition are apparent and deserve more attention in the context of state legitimisation strategies.

Kaptein’s argument that scholarly paradigms of clan division can have a significant real-world impact on self-views and patterns of conflict should be returned to here (2011, 1). There remains scope to explore further the particular mechanisms through which such narratives exert their influence within particular settings, and the overview of the technological context of a trans-regional and transnational public sphere presented here attempts to go some way in explaining how ideas travel, circulate and are deployed by different actors. A concept like ‘clan’, argues Kaptein, ‘derives [its] ever changing meanings from the historical context in which people, through their purposeful or non purposeful action and understanding give it meaning’ (2004, 15). This and previous chapters’

6. Polemical prose and the politics of division

examination of the structure of the modern Somali media ecology and the interplay of multiple producers, texts and formats across a divided political space has attempted to demonstrate how, almost paradoxically, the trope of ‘division’ can in itself help construct particular imaginations of ‘Somali’ identity. It has also shown how terminologies change and adapt to new technological and political contexts. This theme is developed in the concluding chapter, tying together the analyses of different types of text in the public sphere and reflecting on the tangible political impact of this modern Somali media ecology.

7. Conclusion

7.1. Transnational media and ‘post post-colonial’ state-building

This thesis has demonstrated that the Somali media ecology is inherently ‘transnational’. This holds true for every level of production and consumption: ranging from the ‘local’ newspapers of Hargeysa speaking to an internationalised audience of diaspora returnees and those connected to financial remittances from abroad; or to a ‘nationalist’-orientated press in Muqdisho addressing media consumers identifying with the global Somali Ummah in terms of their own mobility and connections to the homeland. The existence of foreign-based Somali-language broadcasters with the capacity to reach audiences across the myriad ‘state’ boundaries that divide Somalia and Somalis presents a novel challenge for political authorities attempting to reconstruct ‘post post-colonial’ state structures.

This ‘post post-colonial’ discursive context is tangible in the media texts which have been analysed in previous chapters. In each political centre, histories of Somali statehood are conceptualised as experiments of governance - their failures culminating in the pivotal temporal reference point of the *burburkii* (destruction) of the state in 1991. Subsequent articulations of Somali sovereignty make reference to anti-colonial resistance and re-energise these tropes in various ways: from a militant Islamist or nationalist critique of ‘neo-imperialism’, to Somaliland’s portrayal of a post-union colonisation by ‘the south’. Modern political rhetoric thus engages with a contested ‘colonial’ history in multiple ways, formulating new conceptions of national sovereignty in a media environment characterised both by political fragmentation and the constant reproductions of a broadly homogenised ‘Somali’ cultural identity.

There is a direct relationship between this persistence of political fragmentation and the continued reproduction of the global *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*. Multiple political actors are required to couch claims to legitimacy in terms of this imagined community: a state in Muqdisho presents itself as the representative of all Somalis, while various nationalist critiques of foreign intervention speak, necessarily, to a consciously defined ‘Somali’ polity. Even Somaliland must ground its secessionist claims not in some separate ‘northern’ cultural identity (which would energise clan-based critiques against its separatist political project) but rather in its self-presentation as one sovereign ‘Somali’ state amongst others. Even discourses of the most divisive kind - those based on clan or critiques of ‘clanism’ - reproduce a fundamental ‘cultural’ unity of a body politic. This is the notion that the imagined community is defined by the influence of a genealogical structure and that this constitutes one component of what it means to be a ‘Somali’.

These arguments are based on analysis of the media texts featured through the thesis. In this concluding chapter I reflect on the concrete political implications of this technological and discursive media ecology on conflict and state reconfiguration across and between the territories in question. To do this, I first summarise and further clarify my focus on the cultural, linguistic and religious aspects

of sovereignty, which inform expressions of legitimacy for modern Somali political structures. I critique popular, policy and scholarly interpretations of ideology and ‘radicalisation’, and re-examine recent trajectories of public sphere theorisation, drawing parallels and distinctions between these observations and the particularities of Somali cases. Finally, I argue that the increasing prevalence of protracted state-contestation in certain parts of the broader Islamic world (Libya, Syria, for instance) means that the Somali experience, for all its historical specificity, may come to be an important comparative reference point in terms of the impact of changing public sphere technologies on the dynamics of conflict and expressions of political legitimacy.

7.2. ‘Cultural’ contestation and Somali statehoods

The thesis has asserted that ‘cultural’ contestation is an important component of the reconfiguration of Somali statehood across the political territories examined. Commentators and political actors in each of the territories attempt to legitimise political experimentation and change through appeals to an ‘authentic’ Somali cultural identity, engaging with linguistic, religious and generational tensions over the contours of *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*. It is hard to overstate the significance of the status of the Somali language as a popularly perceived measure of state collapse. Laitin (1977) demonstrated the importance of linguistic formalisation for the development of the post-colonial authoritarian state’s agenda. The educational outreach programs of literacy promotion that this formalisation facilitated in the 1970s are perhaps the achievement of the Barre regime that is remembered most appreciatively by the widest range of communities across Somalia today. Few other initiatives taken by the ‘scientific socialist’ military state are remembered by so many as having had such a broad and positive impact across the Somali regions, or remaining largely untainted by the ‘clanism’ which came to characterise the state. Modern efforts (or declarations) aimed at the preservation of the Somali language and literature by re-emerging political authorities and civil society in Hargeysa, Garoowe and Muqdisho are one aspect of the ‘cultural’ component of state reconstruction highlighted by this thesis. The relationship between such initiatives and the emergence of a transnational Somali media has also been highlighted and both serve to maintain the linguistic hegemony of a mutually intelligible written ‘standard’ Somali (*Af Maxaa Tiri*).

Concerns about the status of the *Af Maay* dialects spoken primarily in the inter-riverine areas of southern Somalia continue to intersect with denunciations of ethno-political marginalisation of the predominantly agro-pastoral groups living there. This debate exists as one of the primary fault-lines of debates over presentations of ‘Somali’ identity and whilst not focusing specifically on linguistic or ethnic ‘minorities’, various chapters of the thesis have analysed the continued presentation of a dominant pastoralist identity within discourses of *Soomaalinimo* and institutions of clan-power allocation. Nonetheless, and as the thesis has also demonstrated, conceptions of ‘tradition’ (for example notions of lineage-based politics) do not remain static and changes identified by other

scholars (for instance, the increased territorialisation of claims) are visible in some of the media texts analysed.

Relative ethnic and linguistic homogeneity across Somalia must be viewed comparatively in the wider African context for its political significance to be appreciated. The contested history of the *Af Maxaa Tiri* ascendancy as ‘standard’ Somali aside, the importance of the mutual intelligibility of this lingua franca, across all of the political territories discussed is distinct in continental perspective. Where else, one could reasonably ask, does a single *African* language exist as mother tongue for a majority of the population *and* operate as *lingua franca* across so many political boundaries? It is this linguistic linkage that underpins and facilitates the transnational Somali public sphere.

The significance of an apparent communicative homogeneity should not mask the degradation and contestation that are popularly perceived to have characterised linguistic change in the post state-collapse era. These discourses echo some of the debates which accompanied the formalisation of the orthography in the early 1970s, particularly with regard to the eventual choice of a Latin alphabet for the script. The accusatory wordplay of Latin as ‘*La’diin*’ (lacking in religion) was used in contemporary debates by those who advocated for the use of Arabic script. Today, whilst there are few calls for Somali orthography to be altered, the increasing prevalence of Arabic (and other foreign languages, particularly English) in educational institutions has made promotion and preservation of written Somali a political issue linked to expressions of statehood in each of the capitals analysed. Examples discussed in previous chapters have highlighted state actors’ initiatives for promoting written Somali as a language of governance, national ‘heritage’, and business. In Somaliland, the most consolidated and stable Somali state apparatus examined here, the greatest efforts have been taken by governmental authorities and public intellectuals to establish institutions and events for the promotion of literary cultural expression. Chapter three’s discussion of the Hargeysa International Book Fair has highlighted the internationally recognised political prestige associated with such efforts, and the more recent holding of similarly branded events in Muqdisho and Garoowe illustrates these cities’ desire to assert themselves as centres of cultural production.

These book fair vignettes also illustrated undercurrents of religiously-articulated cultural contestation concerning international patronage, ‘liberal’ agendas and foreign influence. The following chapters subsequently demonstrated that whilst such debates may take different forms in different security contexts, many of the key critical discourses of foreign intrigue and cultural-religious conspiracy remain salient across the media environment. That reformist Islamist critiques of aid dependence and alleged conspiracies against a religiously-defined *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed* find expression amongst the seemingly endemic political violence in Muqdisho, in the political spaces of a wider south-central and north eastern insurgency, *and* in the relative democratic stability of urban Hargeysa, is illustrative of the socio-cultural context of political debates across these territories.

Chapter five argues that the religious ‘radicalism’ of militant groups such as AS cannot be understood outside of this wider context of socio-cultural change - religious expression and nationalist

discourses which emphasise the intervention of numerous external actors on internal Somali political processes. These critiques of the ‘foreign’ and what I describe as the ‘spectralization’ of AS mobilisation and violence, are expressed both locally (in relation to particular political projects) and trans-nationally via a deterritorialized Somali public sphere. Like narratives of ‘division’, discussed in Chapter six, AS violence is conceived of as a problem for the wider *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*. State language in the public sphere reflects this, for example, in Muqdisho, where the government announces the commencement of a ‘campaign of inoculation’ against AS (*‘Ololaha talaalka ka hortaga UGUS’*) a physical portrayal of the imagined body politic beset by various external (un-Somali) influences¹.

Chapter three emphasised the war of words conducted between the state and the armed insurgency as well as the difficulties faced by the former in controlling the narrative - such as in their attempted labelling of AS with the acronym *UGUS*, ‘the organisation for the destruction of the Somali Ummah’. Such a struggle is no mere sideshow to the conventional warfare or counter-insurgency waged alongside it, but rather cuts to the heart of linguistic and cultural contestation over the identity of the re-emerging (Muqdisho-based) Somali state. Here the politics of Somali-usage versus or alongside Arabic echoes debates in the 1970s and illustrates the fluid linguistic context with which emerging state structures engage. Political claims to authentic ‘Somali’ cultural preservation are, however, multiple and Chapter five has demonstrated that even ostensibly internationalist Islamists cast their governance and militancy in these terms. AS’s narratives of economic ethno-nationalism portray a ‘traditional’ Somali rural idyll, and propaganda around their dealings with clan representatives demonstrates a sensitivity to *Xeer* (customary law) based norms of inter-clan reconciliation, as well as strict adherence to Shariah.

Further research could fruitfully explore the use of the *gabay* poetic form by AS propagandists and supporters - a mode of cultural expression quintessentially ‘Somali’ and consciously linked to the wider canon of oral Somali literature and political communication². While modern appeals are not made directly to the early 20th century anti-colonial leader ‘Sayyid’ Maxamed Cabdullah Xasan (perhaps given his contentious legacy amongst certain clans, particularly in the north) it is important to recall his superlative deployment of poetic rhetoric as an almost visceral weapon of war (Samatar 1982). Literary analysis of the production of other Islamist militants in different contexts has emphasised cultural nationalism as a facet of modern jihadi mobilisation (see Van Linschoten and Kuehn 2012 on the Taliban) and whilst this thesis has limited its scope to news

¹ I am grateful to journalist Liban Ahmed for drawing my attention to this type of language. See Radio Muqdisho, May 18 2015 *‘Ololaha talaalka ka hortaga UGUS oo galabta furmay’* [Campaign for inoculation against UGUS was commenced this afternoon] <http://www.radiomuqdisho.net/ololaha-talaalka-ka-hortaga-ugus-oo-galabta-furmay/>

² See, as one of numerous examples, Somalimemo.net, September 8, 2014, *‘Gabay Ku Saabsan Asha-hiid Bi’idnillaahi Sheekh Abuu Zubeyr’* [Poem about the martyred Sheekh Abuu Zubeyr] <http://somalimemo.net/articles/894/Gabay-Ku-Saabsan-Asha-hiid-Biidnillaahi-Sheekh-Abuu-Zubeyr>

media and the ‘modern’ language of political debate, I note the use of poetry by AS to illustrate explicit appeals to ‘Somali’ cultural legitimacy. Here, as with much of their propaganda, religious and ethnic identities are fused and homogenised. In this formulation the Somali religious tradition is entirely Islamic, and a binary is created between those who oppose their agenda (they are thus neither Muslims nor good ‘Somalis’) and *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*, implicitly orthodox and Sunni, with increasingly little direct reference made to religious contestation on Salafi/Sufi lines³. Although this has not always been the case – AS made the iconoclasm of Sufi sites a common feature of their public presentation up until around 2010 – recent propaganda of the type explored in Chapter five has emphasised an unproblematic and seemingly monolithic Islam which characterises the areas under their control.

The generational and transnational dynamics of this cultural contestation should be identifiable in this analysis, although the multiplicity of influences and the decentralized nature of the broader public sphere belie any binary-type categorisations of ideological orientation. In one sense, the development of Islamism in modern Somalia can be attributed to the religio-political agency of an emerging generation of activists, clerics and militants who have had no prior experience of a unified Somali state (and its largely secular orientations). The eponymous ‘youth’ of AS are commonly understood as making up the bulk of its fighters: uneducated, indoctrinated and willing to die for a poorly understood religious calling. Whilst there may be elements of truth to this characterisation, the ‘Shabaab’ could also describe a generation of cadres and militant leaders who have come to political maturity in the post 1991-context, a cohort of Islamist activists who cut their teeth in the development of the judicial-political structures of the short-lived Union of Islamic Courts or networks of salafi-orientated businessmen who have prospered in various sectors of a largely stateless economy. Some of these figures are, or have been, members of AS, others have followed trajectories which have taken them into positions of power within the Transitional or Federal Somali Governments.

As a political discourse, secularism is practically nonexistent. Contestation in Muqdisho, in the absence of recognisable political parties, can often be characterised in terms of factional Islamism, underpinned by commercial interests and a semi-institutionalised clan-arithmetic of appointments and perceived allegiances. The Somali Federal Government, beholden to multiple sources of foreign patronage is obligated to defer to some of the normative preferences of the ‘international community’ in terms of support for human rights and democratisation. At the same time, the increasing role of newly assertive and (financially) persuasive players from the Islamic world (particularly Turkey,

³ Al Jazeera International broadcast, July 2012 ‘Imposing Islamic Law: Somalia’s Al Shabaab accept nothing else’ available on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZJN91idBM> ; Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada report: ‘Somalia: Situation of practitioners of Sufism in Mogadishu; incidents of violence involving al Shabaab [Al-Shabaab] and practitioners of Sufism; security situation and availability of state protection in Mogadishu’ [SOM104995.E], 24 November 2014 http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/299654/422239_en.html ; BBC Somali, March 25, 2010 ‘Shabaab oo burburineysa qabrigii Shiikh Maxamed Biya Maaloow’ [Shabaab destroying tomb of Sheikh Maxamed Biya Maaloow] http://www.bbc.com/somali/news/story/2010/03/100325_sawirro_qabriga_biyomaaloow.shtml

Saudi Arabia, Qatar, sensitive, like the West, to Somalia's continued geopolitical importance in the Horn) sets an ideological context which further promotes various strands of political Islamist political thought, increased Sunni orthodoxy and a continued shift in popular cultural orientation towards the Arab/Islamic world.

These broad ideological trends should not be imagined as standing opposed to the democratisation of political processes in south-central Somalia. The main impediment here is not political Islam, but rather continued instability, AS resilience and an inability of the SFG to channel resources to 'liberated' regions or extend of meaningful control and public services. Looking north, the discussion of Somaliland highlights the development of doctrinal Islamist reformism, assertive discourses of social conservatism and critiques of 'Western' interference *within* the context of a vibrant democratic process, itself framed by a nationalist mythology of historical struggle and legitimate sovereignty.

Such dynamics are influenced by the mobility of segments of the populations in Somalia and Somaliland, and the international orientations of communities affected in various ways by migration has been highlighted in previous chapters' analyses of media production. Here, the 'transnational' or the 'diasporic' is often integrated into 'local' media production and consumption. The popularity of the geographically detached cartoonist Amin Amir's critiques of politics on the ground in Somalia, is an example of these collapsed spatial distinctions, as is the prevalence of Somali-language media broadcast into and across the political territories of the Horn from the diaspora. The impact of this mobility on shifting popular cultural and the ideological orientations is multifaceted and complicates problematic binary distinctions between the 'local', 'African', 'religious' or 'traditional', and the 'diasporic', 'Western', 'secular' or 'modern'. This is best understood, I argue, through analysis of different debates over 'foreign' influence that find expression in the public sphere and may overlap with the generational dynamics of political imagination highlighted above. For different commentators of contrasting ideological or generational identities negative transnational influences on 'good' or 'authentic' Somali culture are characterised by their apparent foreignness. Moral panic over religiously or culturally inappropriate behaviour often points to diaspora returnees. These critiques often overlap with political tensions surrounding the apparent capture of re-emerging state structures by these returnees perceived as swooping in from abroad, armed with the skills, capital and connections to take advantage of economic opportunities generated by these processes. Although militant actors such as AS may attempt to take advantage of these types of cleavages, such discourses are not limited to their propaganda and find expression in the broader public spheres of these re-emerging political centres.

From a contrasting ideological perspective, it is AS militancy, social and political Salafi-ism or growing doctrinal Sunni orthodoxy that are regarded by some as the foreign imports - quintessentially 'un-Somali' in their restrictive and intolerant attitudes to cultural and religious (Islamic) expression. An older generation of public sphere commentators frequently laments the

young people from the diaspora who join AS's jihad in Somalia, or that of groups such the 'Islamic State' in the Syria and Iraq. They may also, in less explicitly political terms, advocate a nostalgic imagining of a pre-state collapse cultural idyll based on 'traditional' Somali Islam, pastoral customs and literature. It is important to note, however, that such discourses rarely entertain – in public, at least – a nostalgia for the secular state itself or its social liberalism. This is a function of a broad imagination of the 'failure' of 'Somali/scientific socialism' as a past political experiment for *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*, and sensitivity to popular orientations towards increased public piety and doctrinal orthodoxy, visible on the streets of modern Somalia or Somaliland.

I do not intend here to present a typology of commentators in terms of generational or ideological affiliation. These are simply observations of the discursive tenor of multiple texts that I have encountered in Somali public spheres of political debate, a sample of which has been analysed in depth in previous chapters. The purpose of this sketching is instead to emphasise the multiplicity of media or 'cyber'-subjectivities enabled and conditioned by an inherently transnational public sphere. Furthermore, the examples used highlight the tendency for a range of *contrasting* ideological positions - in their critique of the 'foreign' - to reproduce similar discourses of *Soomaalinimo*: that imagined ethno-religious community existing beyond current state structures. As Chapter five points out this holds true even for pro-*jihadi* propaganda, the political-ideological orientation that could be conceived as being most potentially hostile to the reification of an ethnic solidarity as a basis for political organisation. Here the ethnic and religious are simply presented as being inseparable – a discursive tactic in itself that neutralizes any notion of a diversity of Islamic religious practice in Somalia in favour of the jihadists' own salafi/takfiri/wahhabi orthodoxy.

7.3. Ideology, 'radicalisation' and the religious public sphere

Amidst the real-politick of contestation for land, the material benefits of international patronage for those who capture the re-emerging Somali state, or the class-like dynamics of ethnic-economic marginalisation suffered by 'minority' peoples, it can be easy to dismiss the ideological drivers of conflict in modern Somalia. Having employed a primarily constructivist epistemology from the outset, this thesis has emphasised the complex intertwining of material and ideological influences which structure the agency and worldviews of political actors in a context of extreme power fragmentation. A purely instrumentalist account of elites (for example, AS ideologues) manipulating and brainwashing a generation of uneducated and marginalised youth into suicide operations for a religiously misguided jihad is inadequate in that it overlooks the potentially 'elite' backgrounds of some of those fighters who themselves willingly give up their lives in military or terrorist attacks, and the risks faced by a insurgent leadership in confronting US power in the Horn of Africa⁴. This

⁴ The Star newspaper, Nairobi June 4, 2015 'Garissa Campus Terrorist was a Law Graduate' http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2015/04/06/garissa-campus-terrorist-was-a-law-graduate_c1113802 ; see also the case of Somaliland opposition party leader Faysal Cali 'Waraabe''s son joining the 'Islamic State' in Syria: BBC Somali

recognition is not intended to romanticise their struggle but rather put into context the agency and motivations of ‘radical’ ideologues, military planners and would-be Islamist governors who operate under the constant threat of death by Reaper drone and Hellfire missile.

Such an observation also speaks to a pervasive ‘liberal’ discourse in the West which continually marginalises the ideological underpinnings of terrorism in favour of explanations which emphasise social marginalisation, alienation, and a lack of education. These factors are not irrelevant, however such narratives may ignore the explicitly ideological rationales deployed by educated, politically-aware young people to explain their militant or ‘radical’ agency. The military rationality of such actions – fomenting chaos in the West and drawing it further into an unwinnable conflict in the Middle East – should be evident, for all its moral repugnance in its disregard for civilian lives. The impulse to attribute terrorism to misguided and misled individuals stems in part from a somewhat admirable intention to draw the focus away from Islam itself, denying right-wing and xenophobic Western nationalists an explanation that singles out Muslims as a homogenous group sharing a singularly and inherently violent religion. Critically engaging, however, with the stated political-ideological argumentation of militants should not necessarily entail the construction of a monolithic conception of Islam, nor lend legitimacy-by-acknowledgement to any particular worldview or justification for violence.

In the case of AS, this thesis has attempted to illustrate how the discursive foundations of their military struggle in fact overlap with multiple ‘nationalist’ narratives in a wider Somali public sphere concerning alleged neo-colonialism, the division of *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed* and the nefarious influence of ‘Christian’, foreign powers. Ignoring this wider discursive context, many accounts attempt to explain ‘radicalisation’ (to inoculate against it) by distinguishing this type of agency or thought from that of ‘moderate’ Muslims, or present a religious/secular political dichotomy which is very hard to actually identify in modern Somali politics. Ignoring the wider discursive or socio-religious context means that studies of militancy can make such supposedly explanatory statements as:

‘it is significant that all the interviewees [demobilised AS recruits] grew up in areas where Muslims were in the majority and that they had a very negative perception of religious diversity and acceptance of other religions’ (Botha & Abdile 2014, 6)

This leads one to ask: where exactly in Somalia is this *not* the case? Where in Somalia (or Somaliland) does public religious diversity (particularly in terms of other faiths) actually exist? It is perhaps somewhat facetious to pick on this particular comment in isolation, however I would argue that it is emblematic of many external analyses of militancy which dichotomise ‘radical’ and legitimate political agency at the expense of accurate presentations of discursive and socio-religious complexity and a blurring of these problematically pejorative categorisations. This thesis has argued

that ‘radical’ narratives must be understood *within* the context of wider (ethno-nationalist) public spheres, and not as a separate strand of politico-religious thought.

De Waal’s conceptualisation of the Horn of Africa’s ‘market-place’ politics, introduced in Chapter one, sidelines ideological appeals to nationalism, arguing that such rhetorical strategies only avail themselves to ‘particularist’ insurgencies, led by actors who will be required to conform to material political bargaining when or if they obtain power (2015, 210). As previous chapters of this thesis have demonstrated, it is difficult to conceive of political Islam in the Somali context as such a niche pursuit, or as a rhetorical appeal available only to a small ‘radicalised’ cohort of cadres and militants. Indeed, I would argue that the modern discursive battlefield in Somalia – combined with the wider socio-cultural influence of an increasingly orthodox Sunni Islam - leaves considerable scope for actors to apply a professed agenda of anti-‘foreign’ religious nationalism while remaining sensitive to the material realities of fragmented power politics and diverse economic interests. Recall how the judicial advance of the Islamic Courts Union was only stemmed by (US-backed) Ethiopian military action, an invasion which subsequently empowered AS as a radical fringe to consolidate yet more territory under a cross-clan administration. Once again, this experiment did not collapse under the weight of its internal contradictions (religious nationalism versus clan real-politick, for instance) but rather through the conventional advance of African Union military assets funded and supported by the wider ‘International Community’. The point here is not to dispute the pervasiveness of securitised transnational security patronage as outlined by De Waal, but instead emphasise the potential resilience of forms of religious ethno-nationalism which can draw selectively from a global vocabulary of East/West, Muslim/unbeliever confrontation.

De Waal’s point that intellectual energies in the Horn are no longer concentrated in post-independence national universities is accurate and deserves further reflection here (*Ibid*, 202). The technological development of the Somali public sphere, the growth of the private tertiary education sector and continued political fragmentation have created a context which promotes the diffusion of such (potentially ideological) energies through multiple channels and towards different political-regional projects. The complex interconnectedness of these forums – particularly in regards to the prevalence of over-arching transnational Somali media networks – ensures, however, that a wider Somali public sphere is maintained. Multiple voices are thus required to speak to *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed* defined in either political or cultural terms, to legitimate various projects and discourses of authority and development.

This thesis has employed an explicitly non-normative conceptualisation of the Somali public sphere (in terms of the Habermasian democratic potential for rational-critical debate), and one which emphasises the interplay of local and trans-nationalised circuits of media production. The term ‘public sphere’ has been employed in preference to a broader and more amorphous notion of ‘popular culture’ for the simple reason that producers within this information context understand themselves to be, and present their work in, specific political contexts where argumentation and form (e.g. conventions of

news media) are perceived as contributing to public debate. News media is conceptualised by numerous actors as playing specific roles within state reconstruction processes, and even some of the most seemingly identity-bound rhetoric (found for instance in jihadi propaganda) is often presented in the didactic and ration-critical formulations of modern multi-media 'news' formats.

Understanding 'modernity' in the discursive environment of political argumentation in Somalia has been an important component of the thesis's methodological approach. This can be considered here in comparison to the orientation of recent public sphere literature towards religious civil-society and the notion of 'counter-publics'. Meyer and Moors conceptualise a religiously-orientated public sphere as an oppositional space to the state. Aside from calling into question the necessarily secular foundations of the classical concept, a religious public sphere, in this sense, creates possibilities for the imagination of collective identity (à la Anderson) beyond the nation-state (2006, 4), a theme returned to numerous times in this thesis. They argue that 'with the diminishing capacity of the nation-state for constructing communities of belonging, sub publics and transnational publics that are grounded in religious convictions, imaginaries, and networks have become increasingly important' (*Ibid*, 12). Similarly, Hirschkind's exploration of the 'cassette ethics' of Islamic sermon distribution in Egypt grapples with the limited scope of Habermas' emphasis on ration-critical discourse as constitutive of the public sphere. He argues that in contrast to the 'formation of political opinion through intersubjective reason, the discursive arena wherein cassette sermons circulate is geared to the deployment of the disciplining power of ethical speech, a goal, however, that takes public deliberation as one of its modalities' (2006, 30). His account does not establish a tradition (Islam) versus modernity (state) dichotomy, but does emphasise the existence of a potentially omnipresent counter-public of religious identification, facilitated by the cheap reproduction and dissemination of religious material.

The notion of religious counter-publics is problematic for the Somalia case studies given the absence of a clearly defined and oppositional secular state. Although it is true that militant Islamists such as AS attempt to develop counter-narratives in diverse forms of media production against a state that is defined in terms of 'apostasy' and the alleged renouncement of Islam, a broader overview of the discursive battlegrounds of Somali politics has revealed the multiple ways in which Islam is appropriated by different politics actors, alongside and often inseparable from (and not in opposition to) ethno-nationalist rhetorical devices. Whilst the actually existing secularism of different state projects across Somalia can be compared from a political-juridical perspective, in the self-definition of these entities the language of secularism is almost entirely absent.

Schultz's discussion of 'publicness' in the context of popular debate in Mali employs Geschiere and Nyamnjoh's observation that 'culture' in many settings can 'no longer serve as a register to appeal to a common national identity and political agenda; [and instead] becomes an idiom through which claims to local particularity in a multicultural nation-state are justified' (2000, cited in Schultz 2006, 113). This enables the writer to assert that one of the ways to understand political

Islam's expansion into the public sphere is the state's reduced capacity (in 'cultural' terms) to gain popular emotive allegiance. The peculiar nature of prolonged state collapse in Somalia has produced a discursive environment in which dominant narratives of state-reconstruction fuse an apparently homogenous conception of 'Somali' culture with appeals to shared Islamic faith, rendering almost meaningless this notion of separation between different types of emotive appeal. This is not to say that cultural contestation does not exist in the context (and the very fact of homogeneity is frequently challenged) however the terms of the debate all engage Islam as a potentially unifying trope of political identity.

This thesis' use of these concepts of religious public-sphere production has highlighted repeated overlaps in the Somali cases between discourses of political, cultural and religious sovereignty. At the same time, the deployment of this terminology recognizes the potential for the emergence of new types of 'critical' subjectivity embedded within public sphere producers and consumers' ideas of their own 'publicness' and their relation to political authority (Schulz, 2006, 145). This has a technological aspect in the sense that actors are willing and able to speak within a trans-border, global and explicitly 'Somali' public sphere. Political authorities and separatist nationalists may attempt (with varying levels of success) to construct more localised public spheres around particular political institutions or processes, however they remain bound to communicate within the wider Somali-language networks of international broadcasters in order to make claims to legitimacy and engage in rhetorical contestation over Somali statehoods. It is telling that the most frequent and highly-publicised confrontations between the media and state authorities occur over the reportage of these international Somali broadcasters such as Voice of America or Universal TV. This is not to suggest that state authorities do not engage with or attempt to regulate more 'localised' media, but it is understandable that there is greater scrutiny of the production of these larger transnational networks particularly in the context of macro-contestations of legitimate sovereignty across the territories.

7.4. Implications for state-formation: the public sphere and monopolies of violence

The influence of the Somali media ecology on state-building and political violence has been touched upon in the preceding section and in previous chapters. This conclusion now advances some more concrete findings on the potential trajectories of political consolidation across the Somali case studies, drawing on recent comparative literature on communications technology and state contestation. Although a wealth of scholarly and journalistic attention has been paid to the role of social media in the Arab Spring, the focus on the emancipatory potential of decentralized electronic networks of communication and mobilisation against coherent authoritarian states often leads accounts in an overly normative direction, limiting the potential for analysis of the practical ramifications of technological change on state power. Indeed, some sceptics emphasise the capacity of authoritarian

states to harness the power of such social media networks in innovative and pervasive ways, neutralizing any comparative advantage of anti-state activists (Morozov 2012).

As has been noted above, the Somali context differs from these Middle Eastern examples in that there exist multiple state entities, none which have the capacity to act as coherent authoritarians against which popular struggles are mobilised. What then can be gained here from the burgeoning literature on Arab communications revolutions? Firstly, comparisons can be made between the growth of pan-Arab satellite news media in the early 2000s (exemplified by Al Jazeera, see Sakr 2007 and Hafez 2008) and the development of similar trans-state Somali-language news networks. In the former context, the development of a truly pan-Arab public sphere did not so much undermine the hegemony of the nation state form, but rather facilitated the spread of the anti-regime *zeitgeist* which engulfed the region in the development of the Tunisian uprising, eventually helping to unseat or seriously challenge numerous governments in the region.

In the Somali case, I have not argued that the growth of such satellite or online media sets the stage for a practical reawakening of pan-Somali statehood, but rather contributes to the construction and reproduction of the '*Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*' imagined community across the various centres of power. Although the realities of state contestation and conflict currently override any politically unifying capacity of this public sphere, the fact that such affective cultural discourses seem to thrive in the context may itself be a function of the flux and uncertainties of political developments on the ground across Somalia.

In analysing the resilience of this imagined ethno-community alongside the technological advances in media production it is also necessary to consider the commercial logics of the information economy and the role of advertising across the public sphere. Touched upon in previous chapters, examples have been provided of commercial content marketed through local and transnational Somali media to consumers across the world. In fact, the inherent trans-nationalism which I argue characterises 'local' media in Somalia is often most visibly evidenced by the fact that airwaves and web-pages are full of advertisements for services and commodities located in virtually every world city where Somali populations reside. Reflecting the potential mobility of (elite) consumers as well as the financial connections linking the wider urban population with kin in the diaspora, such advertising not only reaffirms to audiences the globalised nature of *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*, but the content itself often reproduces certain tropes of 'Somali' identity, most obviously the imagery of the pastoral idyll and wealth in livestock. Usually steering clear of overt political bias – and with an eye on expanding access to new markets – such commercial content serves to reproduce the imagined ethnic community across multiple political boundaries. This in turn conditions the wider discursive environment within which political authorities communicate and legitimise their state projects.

Looking at social media engagement, Lynch (2011) notes that the qualities making tools such as Twitter or Facebook useful for evading authoritarian repression (anonymity, spontaneity, lack of hierarchy) may undermine its ability to help build the institutional foundation of a working

democracy. Social media here may be a force for ‘permanent revolution,’ and while this may help undermine autocracy, it may be less helpful in building the institutional foundations of democracy (or new state structures). The technological foundations of Somali public spheres allow for the production and consumption of multiple narratives of political struggle and legitimacy. The inability of the state to project its voice as the dominant narrative, combined with the increased potential for individualised media consumption via devices such as internet-connected smart-phones, further facilitates discursive fragmentation. In the Somali case, distinctions between social and ‘official’ media are blurred with multiple political actors and media broadcasters employing a variety of different platforms to promote or directly disseminate content. This is, again, a result of the contemporaneous development of new media technologies and state structures, as opposed to the classic image of an authoritarian state attempting to come to grips with the new communicative possibilities available to its citizens.

The ways in which a re-emerging state, for example in Muqdisho, attempts to utilise social or popular media have implications for the extent to which it is able to consolidate a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. State authorities here recognise the value of winning hearts and minds in an ideological struggle with a militant Islamist movement which has demonstrated previous capacity for state, administrative and judicial development. However, as was discussed in Chapter three, the broadcasting of detailed information relating to investigations, counter-intelligence, counter-insurgency and judicial process, may in itself undermine these efforts against a foe which is able to penetrate into state institutions by way of a network of agents and informants.

Another highly pertinent example of this dynamic emerged during the writing of this concluding chapter, illustrating state media agency and the role of journalists not only as communicators but *combatants*. Xasan Xanafi, a journalist affiliated with AS’s Radio Andalus, was extradited to Somali from Kenya to face trial for his involvement of the killing of several other media workers in Muqdisho between 2007 and 2011. *Prior* to him being sentenced to death by a Military Court, Somali National Television (in collaboration with the National Intelligence and Security Agency) released an almost two hour long documentary entitled ‘*Dilaaga Wariyaha – waa kuma Xasan Xanafi?*’ (‘The journalist killer – who is Xasan Xanafi?’) featuring an extended confession from the accused in custody⁵. Two months later Xanafi was executed by firing squad. This was a public execution: pictures in the Somali media appeared in my Twitter *newsfeed* moments after it occurred. Unlike other state execution footage taken from this same site at Muqdisho’s General Kahiye Police Academy which I have been (regrettably) exposed to, here the condemned man’s face was initially pictured without a hood. It is conceivable that this was part of the state’s performance of justice for this highly publicised and case in regards to a very recognizable individual.

Considerations of adequate judicial process (or affronts to basic human dignity) aside, this case is related here to demonstrate both the capacity and challenges faced by the state in waging a

⁵ Somali National Television, February 5, 2016 ‘*Dilaaga Wariyaha – waa kuma Xasan Xanafi?*’ [Journalist killer – who is Xasan Xanafi?’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-nGbpr0Wkc>

public discursive battle against AS in ‘state’ and ‘social’ media. The very broadcasting of Xanafi’s confession *enabled* the construction of a counter-narrative by (presumably) pro-AS propagandists who supposedly obtained a voice recording of Xanafi in custody distancing himself from what he alleged was a forced confession at the hands of local and Western intelligence operatives⁶. Released as another video documentary on Youtube, the film was less concerned with Xanafi’s alleged guilt or innocence but rather the role of foreign security agencies⁷. Characteristic of other highly internationalist and externally-connected propaganda material, the film featured reportage from the UK’s Channel Four News: a piece by British-Somali journalist Jamal Osman on foreign detention and interrogation in Muqdisho. The film was promoted via pro-AS websites, although it was claimed to be the work of an organisation named ‘Justice 4 Journalists’. This organisation – distinct from an organisation of the same name in Kenya – has little else in the way of an online footprint and is likely a mere front for jihadi sympathisers. It is notable that the film is bilingual (Somali voiceover or interview, English subtitles) and the organisation supposedly behind its production is branded almost as a Western-style human-rights advocacy group. Aside from demonstrating the range of formats employed by anti-state elements in their propaganda this example highlights the constant discursive interaction, via ‘social’ and ‘official’ media, between the state and the armed opposition, or their supporters. Such counter-narratives feed into a public sphere highly responsive to conspiracy theories and the constant invocation of external agendas and motivations.

I understand conspiracy here in Wolfe’s formulation as ‘less a particular narrative than a particular *way of assembling narratives* that performs the function of not only supplying a moral map to the political landscape but, more profoundly, of rescuing truth by rediscovering it in a particular discursive technique’ (1997, 70 my emphasis). I highlight this productive process to reflect on the way in which the technologies of the modern Somali public sphere facilitate such complex and transnational *assemblage* of narratives. Consider the example above of the Somali-language pro-jihadi website, using also Arabic, Swahili and English, promoting, mediating and commenting on an English-language propaganda film on Youtube that is masquerading as reportage from a ‘civil society’ human-rights advocacy group. The linguistic, stylistic, thematic and discursive diversity of this propaganda production calls into question any simple narrative dichotomies framed between local/international, religious/secular, western/Islamist public sphere production. Appeals to rational-critical argumentation here speak not to the ‘killer’s’ guilt or innocence, but rather external power projection into conflict in Muqdisho - Somalia situated in the global context of the War on Terror and ‘neo-imperialism’. My argument is that the conditions of the Somali public sphere, *in the midst* of ongoing state reconstruction, facilitate a wide range of rational-critical subjectivities; a potential

⁶ Whether or not this recording is genuine is unclear - the sound quality makes it difficult to confirm that the voice is that of Xanafi, as broadcast by SNTV.

⁷ Justice 4 Journalists, March 28, 2016 ‘Confessions of a killer’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=egKm-ibQkM8>

diversity which is seldom captured in the public sphere literature, even when focused on the religious contours of ‘non-western’ deliberative practice.

Another point to be made here is that in engaging in ‘social’ media contestation, an unconsolidated state positions itself on the same discursive playing field as its competitors, and (potentially) at a similar level of popularly imagined authority. Consider the National Intelligence and Security Agency in Muqdisho, with its @HSNQ_NISA Twitter feed and 6225 ‘followers’, operating merely as one voice in highly fragmented discursive space⁸. This is a novel challenge to be negotiated by re-emerging states in an era of decentralized media and begs the question: do state actors who feel the need to legitimize themselves via such networks, necessarily lose an aura of sovereign prestige when entering into an arena of narrative-politics where anti-state opposition have the capacity to instantaneously challenge every claim made? If this is a pitfall faced by multi-national corporations in advanced industrialised economies when social media interaction with consumers opens them up to ridicule or critique (Gallaughier and Ransbotham 2010), then what are the consequences for emerging state structures in a conflict zone operating in a similarly uncontrollable public sphere?

This public sphere coexists with a material environment (in Muqdisho, at least) where ‘non-state security providers’ (Menkhaus 2016) operate alongside nascent state forces and compromise any emerging monopoly of state violence. Again, crucial to this formulation is a blurring of state/non-state categorisations in considering neighbourhood, clan-based militias or ‘private security companies’ and a complex political economy of security provision for numerous actors such as state officials, a burgeoning business class, and humanitarian agencies (or foreign researchers!). An intriguing overlap between this security environment and the role of conspiracy theorisation is touched upon by Menkhaus in his recognition that ‘at least some Somali non-state security providers have staged insecurity in order to provide protection, and have worked to undermine the revival of an effective central government and security sector’ (2016, 14). Here the role of the public sphere and a narrative politics of insecurity/‘stabilisation’ comes into focus as a potential site of manipulation for material gain and the perpetuation of what Keen (2000) describes as conditions of ‘durable disorder’.

Before concluding with a discussion of the impact of this communicative context on the overarching theme of ‘ethno-nationalism’, it is first appropriate to survey the ongoing developments in media strategy by the current administrations in each of the ‘capitals’ engaged in the thesis, and potential future trajectories of state reconfiguration and contestation. Despite the continued prevalence of non-state armed actors and the ability of insurgents to attack state structures in the capital, the Somali Federal Government’s emergence and development since 2012 is reflected in their efforts (and modest successes) in establishing a Somali ‘state’ narrative in the Muqdisho public sphere. The SFG’s propaganda strategy has been critically examined above, however it is necessary to point out the significance of the fact that the state is now able to enter into this discursive contestation in the first

⁸ https://twitter.com/HSNQ_NISA (number of followers as of 16 September 2016).

place, through its utilisation of state media such as Somali National Television, Radio Muqdisho and even social media in the form of Twitter communications from security services. Such communications (in Somali, English and Arabic) demonstrate state actors' desire to link political and security consolidation with a wider public sphere narrative that foregrounds 'Somalia rising', optimism surrounding development in Muqdisho, a 'normalisation' of daily life, while critiquing of external accounts which continue to emphasise violence and disorder. The contours of this discussion have been highlighted above with regards to *#Cadaanstudies* and critical analysis of foreign mainstream media, and it bears repeating that the state retains the potential to discursively link itself to these types of narrative, taking advantage of genuine nationalist enthusiasm for state reconstruction (and cultural renaissance) in the capital.

State media development in Puntland reflects the administration's ambiguous orientation towards Somali state reconstruction in Muqdisho. Authorities in Garoowe have developed legal and political mechanisms to control (or attempt to control) narratives around Puntland's legitimacy: here the state's Ministry for Information has played an important role in drafting a media law, challenging international broadcasters such as VOA, as well as cultivating links with telecommunications providers - facilitating periodic control over certain websites. The emergence of 'PLTV' (openly 'serving and defending Puntland's interests'⁹) with the support of foreign financing is indicative both of the state's long-term media sensitivity, and its aspirations to quasi-statehood legitimated by external patronage and relations. This state-making, conflict and communications nexus was recently epitomised in Puntland's expression of a clear media narrative around its forces' defeat of AS militants moving north into its territory from Galmudug state. Conspiracy theories regarding the role that Muqdisho played in this AS movement were voiced by state figures on transnational Somali cable TV broadcasters, but perhaps of greater importance was the manner in which images of captured AS child-soldiers were disseminated. The Puntland state was eager to portray its role in demobilising and re-educating these youngsters whilst attempting to delegitimise the Islamist militants¹⁰. The subtext to all of these reports was that Puntland security forces had demonstrated an operational coherence that had not been evident in Muqdisho, thus undermining periodic calls for AMISOM forces to expand their theatre of operations into the northeast. That Puntland can broadcast its apparent lack of reliance on external military assets (covert security and intelligence support notwithstanding) also serves as

⁹ PLTV promotional slogan: '*PLTV u adeegaha iyo difaaca danaha Puntland*' [PLTV as server and defender of Puntland's interests]

¹⁰ Puntland Post, April 19 2016: '*maxaabiistii laga qabtay al shababkii Puntland soo weeraray oo waxbarasho loo bilaabay*' [Education program begins for prisoners taken from Al Shabaab [after] their attack on Puntland]. Head of Puntland Custodial Corps addresses media at Garoowe prison (UNODC funded and built), indicative again of the role of external security support in Puntland's state-building efforts. <http://puntlandpost.net/2016/04/19/maxaabiistii-laga-qabtay-al-shababkii-puntland-soo-weeraray-oo-waxbarasho-loo-bilaabay/>

propaganda for Garoowe – a fact of no small potential significance given continuing constitutional debates over the potential relocation of the Somali capital as part of federalisation process¹¹.

News media in Hargeysa plays an integral role in carving out the discursive space for Somaliland's political project of secession and independence. Whilst 'local' public spheres of media production are discernable across the different Somali urban political case studies, it is for Somaliland that this arena of information transmission and debate has its most tangible impact on imaginations of statehood. The vocabularies of political institutions are constantly reproduced in the Hargeysa-based news media, actively engaged in establishing the city as the capital of an independent Somali state. As examples in the previous chapters have demonstrated, these institutions are not merely conceived of as static, formal structures of governance, but also as embodiments of nationalist historical narratives and repositories of normative political-cultural values. Implicitly and explicitly, appeals to 'Somali' cultural heritage speak to wider audiences in a transnational public sphere, attempting to legitimise the political secession of Somaliland as a new member of a regional configuration of 'Somali' states or administrations. Employing conventions of 'foreign' and 'domestic' news broadcasting, the Somaliland media constantly affirms the spatial coherence of the independent state (not always corresponding with a fuzzier reality in the borderlands) standing alongside but separate to, political neighbours of Ethiopia and 'Somalia' (or a Puntland 'administration'). Selective coverage of developments, particularly in these latter two territories, foregrounds the implicit legitimacy of a Somaliland project in the face of continued political or military instability elsewhere. On a news media stage, Somaliland's statehood is performed for an 'international community' (from whom formal recognition is demanded) and also the wider Somali-language public sphere, itself structured, financed and staffed by a highly mobile diaspora, active politically in various communities inside the Horn and in the broader diaspora. The internationalisation of statehood discourses is similarly clear in the tone and focus of media production in Hargeysa itself. This not only collapses distinctions between 'local' and 'diasporic' production but indicates the influence of mobile elites in the wider politics of state reconstruction or reconfiguration across Somalia - a factor also evident in the discussions of media output and debate elsewhere in the Somali Horn.

Although it is difficult to speculate further on the state-making trajectories of the three political centres addressed by this thesis, I offer some modest reflections here. At the time of the completion of this thesis, the selection of a new Parliament and transfer of executive power to Maxamed Cabdulaahi 'Farmaajo' has been successfully undertaken through an indirect regional process and the votes of new MPs. Whilst the former administration of Xasan Sheikh Maxamuud demonstrated the capacity to communicate relatively coherently around the security-orientated struggles against AS, it was unable to control a single narrative around this political transition, particularly given the fact that the original plan for 'one person one vote' elections has been delayed

¹¹ Article 9 of the Provisional Constitution declares that the location of the Somali capital will be confirmed by a 'constitutional review process', led by special legislation passed by both houses of the Parliament.

until at least 2020, due to the wider security situation in the very recently established federal states. Gradually improving security and economic conditions in Muqdisho (tied to continued publicity for state-security advances) may well allow the ‘Somalia rising’ narrative to continue gaining traction to the potential benefit of new, or reorganised, power holders. This process is intimately tied to the consolidation of the nascent federal states and the fight against AS, a foe which has repeatedly defied expectations and remained a credible military (if no longer political) adversary. It is too early, and beyond the scope of this thesis, to comment on potential influence of an emerging Somali-franchise Islamic State, aside from pointing out that Islamist-framed ethno-nationalism will remain a viable rhetorical vehicle for mobilising communities who are marginalised by the ongoing political processes¹². The question remains, however, as to how big and diverse those constituencies will be post 2016.

This thesis has argued that Puntland and Somaliland must be conceptualised as state formations centred around politically influential capital cities. External patronage will remain vital for power-holders, even if the optimal potential window for Somaliland’s international recognition may well have passed. The actual impact of continued non-recognition on Somaliland’s political development is difficult to assess. Democratic processes are now popularly inscribed in imaginations of legitimate state sovereignty, however, the ‘international community’ may be able to exert less leverage over the conduct of elections as prospects for recognition are seen to stagnate, or recede further into the distance. Increasingly muscular anti-liberal discourses in the Somaliland public sphere can be seen, in part, as a reaction to perceived western influence without the prospect of political recognition, as well as the persistent myth that Somaliland has developed (and can continue to develop) without any kind of external (and conditional) humanitarian aid. The popular currency of Somaliland’s nationalist imagination may come to be felt by political elites manoeuvring in negotiations with authorities in Muqdisho – if/when these restart. In the long term, power holders in Hargeysa who attempt to adapt their strategy in the face of diminished hopes of recognition, may find that a weight of popular expectation and uncompromising aspirations to secessionism limits room for diplomatic compromise or effective bargaining for autonomy with Muqdisho. One must not overlook the mobility of political elites and there are numerous figures in Muqdisho who either hail from Somaliland or have served in its government before relocating for new political opportunities in the south. The Somaliland government currently strenuously rejects the involvement of such individuals in negotiations between Hargeysa and Muqdisho, and the extent of any future roles they may be allowed to play will be determined by the level of popular secessionist sentiment as expressed in public in Hargeysa.

Puntland, on the other hand, does not possess such a distinct and clearly articulated historical state nationalist narrative vis-à-vis Muqdisho - complicated as this is by the association of the former

¹² VOA Somali, May 6, 2015, ‘*Daacishta Soomaaliya oo taageero helaya*’ [Daacish in Somalia gaining support]<http://www.voasomali.com/content/somalia-isis/3316314.html>

military regime with the Daarood clan family. This means, however, that it remains less ideologically encumbered than the explicitly secessionist Somaliland in its relationship with the Somali Federal Government. Whether this will lead to greater concessions of autonomy from Muqdisho or the gradual integration of its existing state structures will remain an open question. Needless to say, the current *status-quo* of near total *de facto* independence is not likely to change soon, and it is noteworthy that as a regional administration with neither an independence agenda nor a Somaliland-style democratic success-story, it has still been able to attract a significant degree of international patronage and support. Due to Puntland's position as a theatre of operations against both AS and maritime pirates, this has particularly focused on the security sector, and the development of various paramilitary and intelligence-gathering units will continue to increase the relative influence and leverage held by the administration in continuing negotiations towards a workable federalism. The sight (relayed frequently in the media) of Puntland officials arriving in Muqdisho with their own security-detail of 'special forces' troops, clearly outfitted with externally-sourced equipment, is but the most visible indicator of this power dynamic at work. My analysis of popular Puntland commentaries on the status of Puntlanders in Muqdisho politics has demonstrated how narratives of conspiracy and physical threats in the capital intersect with these expressions of Puntland's independent security-sector capacity.

7.5. Ethno-nationalism beyond the nation state

This thesis has explored the concept of ethno-nationalism in the context of public sphere debate over the reconfiguration of the Somali state. It has argued that there exists a dialectical relationship between realities and narratives of political fragmentation and the increased reproduction of discourses engaging an ethnically, religiously, linguistically and culturally-defined Somali 'Ummah'. This counter-intuitive process can be seen to work in various ways: political fragmentation requires commentators to legitimate a diverse range of political projects to a transnational 'Somali' audience, in the context of reconstruction of a 'post post-colonial' Somali state. Across the Somali territories the 'state' is being re-imagined and politically reconfigured: by Somalilanders who stake juridical legitimacy on a British colonial boundary; by Islamists explicitly invoking the notion of 'Greater Somalia'; or by power-holders in Muqdisho who wish to recreate a unitary Somali state but recognise the necessity of re-adjusting mechanisms of representation and regional power distribution to address the failures of post-independence statehood.

Even where political secession is the stated objective this cannot be justified through recourse to a more limited and parochial identity in that this would leave the project open to charge that it constitutes a mere political vehicle of the dominant clan-family. In this sense Somaliland's statehood is articulated as just this, a culturally 'Somali' state, existing as a legitimate 'Somali' political entity in a Horn populated by other 'Somali' administrations. Islamist mobilisations necessarily invoke ethno-nationalist discourses, through re-engagement of anti-colonial vocabularies, the legitimisation of

cultural economic or political practices, or the implicit homogenisation of Somali religious identity. Even the most divisive of discourses, that of clan (or critiques of others' 'clanism') ultimately tend to emphasise a cultural homogeneity *in which* genealogical identity constitutes an important pillar of political culture (and one that often discursively harks back to the pastoral emphasis and dominance of the post-colonial state project).

Wimmer and Schiller remind us that the scholarly 'shift towards a study of 'transnational communities'...was more a consequence of an epistemic move away from methodological nationalism than of the appearance of new objects of observation' and note that the nation-state form, far from being fixed and immutable, has always been shaped by cross border movements of people, capital and ideas (2002, 301). This thesis has fore-grounded this mobility in the context of a globalised public sphere which recreates multiple discourses of 'ethno-nationalism' for various political projects and agendas. 'Ethno-nationalism' *is* an appropriate term here in that all of the discourses of political sovereignty (or resistance) discussed in previous chapters ground themselves, in one way or another, in terms of specific notions of what it means to be a 'Somali', an ethnic category appended or expanded by other religious, linguistic or cultural signifiers of identity. The Somali nation state is fundamentally divided and contested, and outside of urban centres it may be largely intangible or be of limited impact (except for the effects of ongoing military operations). State-building, nonetheless, is being undertaken in these towns and cities and a reconfigured Somalia - hype aside - *is* emerging after more than two decades of political stagnation and intractable conflict, particularly in the south. In the northwest and to a lesser extent the northeast, new Somali states have already emerged.

To what extent can a partially deterritorialized and *trans-state* public sphere foster different forms of ethno-nationalism beyond the nation state? Perhaps 'trans-state' is a more appropriate term here, in that this thesis has attempted to demonstrate how an 'imagined community' of the Somali ethno-nation does exist regardless of, and alongside, various political experiments and malleable interpretations of Somali colonial and post-colonial state history. Put another way, to what extent is ethno-nationalism *ethno-nationalism* without the nation-state? To answer these questions it is necessary to, once again, emphasise the distinctiveness of Somali case studies, particularly in regard to the status of ethno-nationalism itself. A key aspect of Wimmer and Schiller's critique is that mainstream political science or history has ignored ethno-nationalism in the context of western state-building (distinguishing states from nations) whilst projecting it into those 'troublesome' parts of the post-colonial or modern world where 'tribalists' undertake ethnocide in the name of the nation (*Ibid* 307). This is a valuable insight that warns against the reification of inherent European 'rationalism' and overlooking the role of ethno-nationalism (and associated violence) in western state-building experiences.

Reflecting on the Somali cases, it is necessary to point out that debates over of this type of brutal, unthinking 'tribalism' are a feature of both the academic literature and modern political and civil society discourse. The crucial difference however, is that this social fragmentation takes places at

the level of the ‘clan’, *within* a genealogical construct of a wider Somali ethnicity that virtually all members of the main clan families (and especially the traditionally pastoralist Daarood, Dir/Isaaq and Hawiye) recognise and reproduce in their political discourses. Ideas of clan do not remain static, and can be seen to shift and adapt to changing contexts of communication and debate. As such, analysis of polemic prose in the previous chapter has shown that this imprecise and problematic notion of the ‘Samaale’ does not exist as an explicit, operationalisable political identity in these debates, perhaps given the continued fragmentation of the territories in question between these dominant clan family constituencies. On the other hand, that chapter has also demonstrated that in certain circumstances or with regard to certain moments in history, broad-brush identifications of ‘clan-family’ agency, organisation or conspiracy do appear in public sphere discourse. Furthermore, implicit within many of these discourses remain appeals to a broadly homogenising pastoralist cultural heritage, an echo of the cultural-identity that was historically reinforced at the centre of the Somali nation-state idea by post-colonial governments.

Having said this, it should also be pointed out that the types of texts analysed in Chapters four and five illustrate the development of potentially broader conceptualisations of Somali ethno-nationalist identity. The fact that cartoonist Amin Amir hails from a ‘minority’ group, but is able to produce material that finds receptive audiences across all of the political territories in question is significant, and this shows the role of a transnational public sphere in facilitating new forms of nationalist expression. From a totally different ideological standpoint, the AS propaganda analysed in Chapter five incorporates both pastoral and non-pastoral tropes of cultural heritage, and demonstrates the Jihadists’ rhetorical commitment to a broadly conceived but identifiably ‘Somali’ ethno-nation of homogenised religious believers. Of course, the reality of AS’s engagement with and governance of ‘minority’ populations is complicated and the chapter emphasises the fact that such rhetoric does not likely correspond with violent and coercive realities on the ground. Nevertheless, the historical development of their resilient and cross-clan networks of militancy - combined with the dynamic and decentred media ecology - has provided space for new articulations of ‘Somali’ ethno-nationalist identity to be expressed.

Ultimately, as the analysis has examined particular types of text with reference to political developments in the three centres of Garoowe, Hargeysa and Muqdisho this has – by and large - excluded many other narratives of so-called ‘minority’ groups (categorisations I have reflected on in previous chapters). In justifying this focus, it must be appreciated that the primary political fault-lines of modern Somali state-making or breaking exist between the dominant clan families and that the primary political dynamic of the violence that characterised the civil war period (contested history that continues to structure narratives of state reconfiguration and contestation) was again defined by such intra-‘Samaale’ contestation. This should not be taken as a down-playing of the disproportionate levels of suffering which affected (and continues to affect) communities outside of these main lineages, and recent trends in Somali studies have continued to emphasise ethnic heterogeneity and

ongoing processes of marginalisation. However, to understand elite political contestation across modern Somalia it is essential to recognise the (popularly perceived) centrality of conflict *amongst* the major Somali lineages, and it is this context, I argue which allows a ‘Somali’ ethno-nationalist discourse to exist in various public spheres *alongside* continued political fragmentation. What is rolled into in many of these debates (for instance a continued emphasis on the pastoral aspect of Somali cultural heritage) may contribute to the further marginalisation of minority groups who have been forced to play the game of state reconfiguration by the rules of ‘4.5’ allocations of positions at regional and national levels of government.

Although clan names may be referenced in terms of modern political history or ongoing contestation, it is nonetheless difficult to speak of distinct identity-projection of the individual clan families either in cultural, linguistic or religious terms, at least in the public sphere. In Somaliland, for example, there is little overt effort to promote or portray an ‘Isaaq’ cultural identity distinct from other groups in *Ummadda Soomaaliyeed*. There does, however, remain significant scope for further fine-grain study of modern poetic literature on this question, and a fruitful study could be undertaken to explore the ways in which Raxanweyne (Digil & Mirifle) identities - in terms of agro-pastoralism and the use of the *Af Maay* dialect - are expressed politically in relation to federal state reconstruction, particularly the emerging Southwest State centred around Baydhabo. Although that has lain beyond the scope of this project, I emphasise here how dominant clan family identities are primarily expressed in political terms: either through claims to autochthony or a seemingly increasing ‘officialisation’ of clan communications and diplomacy - up to and including written agreements made with foreign states such as Kenya¹³. The growing prevalence of claims to clan-based territorial ‘ownership’ is visible in contemporary debates between political actors who identify the long-term ramifications of the federal reconfiguration of Somalia.

Such claim-making corresponds to Dunn’s observation ‘that the [increased] employment of autochthony discourses is an attractive response (one of several possible) to the ontological uncertainty of the postmodern/postcolonial condition’ (2009, 113), while Meyer and Geschiere assert that ‘people’s awareness of being involved in open-ended global flows seems to trigger a search for fixed orientation points and action frames, as well as determined efforts to affirm old and construct new boundaries’ (1999, 2). Such conditions of uncertainty, flux and mobility have been implicit in each of the political contexts of Somali statehood discussed above. If clanic territorial claim-making constitutes one response to political uncertainty, then other discourses in the public sphere (particularly around a universalising or homogenising construction of ‘Somali’ identity) may also be interpreted as popular responses to continued state fragmentation and a distrust of political elites. Whilst it may be tempting to conceive of this solely in terms of civic agency, this formulation may, however, overlook the blurred distinctions between ‘official’ and ‘informal’ state communication in

¹³ Somalia Newsroom, April 28, 2016 ‘Kenya reaches deal with Somali ‘clan’ leaders on border security’ <https://somalianewsroom.com/2016/04/28/kenya-reaches-deal-with-somali-clan-leaders-on-border-security/>

the complex and splintered Somali political environment, where multiple actors lay claim to state vocabularies and discourses of political legitimisation. To focus here in the conclusion on the divisive politics of clan is not to emphasise ‘primordialist’ agency but rather to acknowledge and problematise institutionalisation along the lines of the reductionist ‘4.5’ electoral mechanism that has been deployed once again (perhaps for the last time) in the 2017 selection of the new SFG. The above chapters have explored perceptions of (and discursive contestation over) division, and have emphasised their political expressions through various rhetorical strategies, increasingly territorial-type coding and their interface with radical oppositional narratives of Islamist authority.

Although the distinctiveness of the Somali case has been emphasised above, it is possible to point to potentially useful comparative examples to explore the relationships between political ‘tribalism’, grand discourses of regional ethno-solidarity, and appeals to political Islam. Libya, for example, is often now labelled the ‘new Somalia’ of North Africa, in reference to state collapse and extreme political fragmentation. In this regard, the insights of this thesis may well prove relevant for what is becoming an increasingly prolonged conflict. The ‘tribal’ characteristics of ongoing contestation in the Libyan case are frequently emphasised, and a comparison can be drawn with Somalia in regard to the implicit manipulation of tribal loyalties by Qadhdhafi’s ostensibly socialist and nationalist regime (Anderson 1990) and the unravelling of conflict along these lines in the aftermath of revolution (Hweio 2012). A crucial difference with the Somali case however, was the role of wider pan-Arab nationalist mobilisation - in the context of which Qadhdhafi’s Libya represented but one (distinctive) state project. Post-colonial Somalia, however, was the single state vehicle of pan-Somali nationalism, and failed ethnic irredentism into its neighbouring states set the scene for eventual regime collapse. ‘Somalia’ - as a concept and despite its deeply contested state-history - still exists as the primary affective focus for imaginations of pan-Somali mobilisation, invoked by various political actors.

Despite this important difference there are academic debates already playing out around political and ‘tribal’ fragmentation in Libya relevant for this conclusion on Somali nationalist ideologies. Cherstich (2014) for example, argues that ‘tribalism’ in the current Libyan context can be conceptualised as an ideology in itself, albeit one that belies conventional distinctions between urban ‘nationalist’ or ‘Islamist’ emotive mobilisation, and ‘conservative’ social forces of rural hinterlands. He argues, in contrast to such reductionist dichotomisations, ‘that Libyan tribesmen have ‘national’ and ‘tribal’ as two available narratives (together with others like ‘Islam’ or ‘the revolution’), and that they combine them in complex ways in order to describe, navigate, and affect social reality’ (2014, 407).

To conclude, I note that this description of complex political identity formation in Libya corresponds closely to one of the the central arguments of this thesis: namely, that the coexistence of of Somali ethno-nationalist imaginaries alongside social and political fragmentation represents not so much a paradox, but must instead be understood in the context of a partially de-territorialized public

sphere of identity projection within and across multiple (Somali) political boundaries. The different types of text analysed in my sample have demonstrated how narratives of ethno-nationalism are deployed *alongside* and may be *informed by* discourses of religious solidarity, appeals to clan as an implicit facet of 'Somali' political organisation, or rhetorical critiques of 'tribalism' itself. To argue that 'Somalia' (and, by extension Somali ethno-nationalism) is but a 'myth' (Hesse 2010) with no affective or practical political value in an apparently materialist battleground of elite contestation over the spoils of conflict or state reconstruction, is to ignore the complex interplay between multiple nodes of discursive political argumentation and expressions of identity. Purely instrumentalist accounts of political agency fail to capture the ideological complexity of political contestation in Somalia - narrative battles which individuals, both elites and foot-soldiers, are willing to die for. This thesis has thus attempted to analyse the political significance of such popular discursive contestation within a public sphere which *itself* impacts on the material reconstruction or reconfiguration of monopolies of violence and state-building. The struggle for the reconfiguration of the Somali state will continue and a primary battlefield will remain the public sphere. Such is the current technological context of affective state re-making, and such are the multiple possibilities for reproducing imagined communities of trans-state nations in the 21st Century.

Bibliography

- Abdi, A. A. 1998. "Education in Somalia: History, destruction, and calls for reconstruction." *Comparative Education* 34 (3):327-340.
- Abdi, C. M. 2015. *Elusive Jannah: The Somali Diaspora and a Borderless Muslim Identity*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Abdullahi, A. M. 2010. "Women, Islamists and the Military Regime in Somalia: The New Family Law and Its Implications." in *Milk and Peace, Drought and War: Somali Culture, Society and Politics*, edited by Hoehne M. and V. Luling, 137-160. London: Hurst & Co.
- Abu-Lughod, L. 1989. "Zones of Theory in the Anthropology of the Arab World." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 18:267-306.
- Adam, S. M. 2001. *Gather Round the Speakers: A History of the First Quarter Century of Somali Broadcasting, 1941-1966*. London: Haan.
- Adam, H. M. 2010. "Political Islam in Somali History." in *Milk and Peace, Drought and War: Somali Culture, Society and Politics*, edited by Hoehne M. and V. Luling, 119-35. London: Hurst & Co.
- Adam, H. M. 1995. "Somalia: A Terrible Beauty Being Born?" in *Collapsed States—The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority* edited by Zartman, W. 69-90. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner.
- Adichie, C. N. 2014. *Americannah*. London: Fourth Estate.
- Afrax, M. D. 1981 (1993). *Maana-Faay*, Stockholm: African Triangle.
- Afrax, M. D. 1994. "The Mirror of Culture: Somali Dissolution Seen Through Oral Expression" in *The Somali Challenge: From Catastrophe to Renewal* edited by Samatar, A. I. 233-251. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Afrax, M. D. 1987. *Fan-masraxeedka Soomaalida: Raad raac Taariikheed iyo Faaqidaad Riwaayado Caan Baxay* [Somali Drama: Historical Background and Critical Analysis of Prominent Plays] Nairobi.
- Agbiboa, D. 2015. "Shifting the Battleground: The Transformation of Al-Shabab and the Growing Influence of Al-Qaeda in East Africa and the Horn." *Politikon*. 42:2,177-194.
- Ahad, A. M. 2015. *Somali Oral Poetry and the Failed She-Camel Nation State: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Deelley Poetry Debate (1979-1980)*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Ahmed, A. J. (ed.) 1996. *Daybreak is near: Literature, clans, and the nation-state in Somalia*. London: The Red Sea Press.
- Ahmed, A. J. (ed.) 1995. *The Invention of Somalia*. Trenton: The Red Sea Press.
- Ahmed, I. I. 2000. "Remittances and Their Economic Impact in Post-war Somaliland." *Disasters* 24 (4):380-389.
- Akou, H. M. 2011. *The Politics of Dress in Somali Culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Allen, G. 2011. *Intertextuality*. London: Routledge.
- Alpers, E. A. 1983. "Muqdisho in the nineteenth century: a regional perspective. *The Journal of African History*." 24(4): 441-459.
- Alshaer, A. 2009. "The Poetry of Hamas." *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 2, (2): 181-214.
- Alshaer, A. 2008. "Towards a Theory of Culture of Communication: The Fixed and the Dynamic in Hamas' Communicated Discourse." *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 1, (2): 101-21.
- Anderson, B. 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso Books.
- Anderson, D. M. 2012 "Clan Identity and Islamic Identity in Somalia." CEADS Papers Volume 2: http://csafs.net/downloads/ceads_volume_2_-_ansa_in_somalia.pdf

Bibliography

- Anderson, L. 1990. "Tribe and State: Libyan Anomalies." In *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, edited by Khoury P. and Kostiner J. 288-302. Oxford: University of California Press.
- Andrzejewski, B. W. 2011. "Poetry in Somali society." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 23 (1):5-8.
- Anzalone, C. 2012. "Al-Shabab's Tactical and Media Strategies in the Wake of Its Battlefield Setbacks." *Combating Terrorism Centre Sentinel*, West Point: <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/al-shababs-tactical-and-media-strategies-in-the-wake-of-its-battlefield-setbacks>
- Appadurai, A. & Breckenridge, C. A. 1995. "Public Modernity in India" in *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World*, edited by C. A. Breckenridge. 1-20. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Askew, K. 2002. *Performing the Nation: Swahili music and cultural politics in Tanzania*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bakonyi, J. 2009. "Moral Economies of Mass Violence: Somalia 1988–1991." *Civil Wars* 11(4): 434-454.
- Bakonyi, J. 2013. "Authority and Administration Beyond the State: local governance in southern Somalia, 1995–2006." *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 7(2): 272-290.
- Balthasar, D. 2013. "Somaliland's Best Kept Secret: shrewd politics and war projects as means of state-making." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 7 (2):218-238.
- Balthasar, D. 2014. "Somalia: Unable to Escape its Past? Revisiting the Roots of a Fractured State and Elusive Nation." *Critical African Studies* 6 (2-3):223-239.
- Barber, K. 2006 (ed). *Africa's Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Barber, K. 1997. *Readings in African Popular Culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Barber, K. 2007. *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics: Oral Written Culture in Africa and Beyond*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barnes, C. 2006. "Gubo–Ogaadeen Poetry and the Aftermath of the Dervish Wars." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 18 (1):105-117.
- Barnes, C. and H. Hassan. 2007. "The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1 (2): 151-60.
- Barnes, C. 2007. "The Somali Youth League, Ethiopian Somalis and the Greater Somalia Idea, C. 1946–48." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1, (2): 277-91.
- Barnes, C. 2006. "U Dhashay—Ku Dhashay: Genealogical and Territorial Discourse in Somali History." *Social Identities* 12, no. 4: 487-98.
- Bernal, V. 2005. "Eritrea on-line: Diaspora, Cyberspace, and the Public Sphere." *American Ethnologist* 32 (4): 660-675.
- Bernal, V. 2006. "Diaspora, Cyberspace and Political Imagination: the Eritrean Diaspora Online." *Global Networks* 6 (2):161-179.
- Bernal, V. 2014. *Network as Nation: Diaspora, Cyberspace and Citizenship*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Besteman, C., and L.V. Cassanelli (eds). 2000. *The Struggle for Land in Southern Somalia; The war behind the war*. Washington: Westview.
- Besteman, C. 1998. "Primordialist Blinders: A Reply to IM Lewis." *Cultural Anthropology* 13 (1):109-120.
- Besteman, C. 1995. "The Invention of Goshu: Slavery, Colonialism, and Stigma in Somali History" in *The Invention of Somalia*, edited by Ahmed, A.J. 43-62, Trenton: The Red Sea Press.
- Besteman, C. 1996. "Violent politics and the politics of violence: the dissolution of the Somali nation-state." *American Ethnologist* 23 (3):579-596.
- Billig, M. 2005. *Laughter and Ridicule: Towards a Social Critique of Humour*. London: Sage.
- Birdsell, D. S. and Groarke, L. 1996. "Toward a Theory of Visual Argumentation" *Argumentation and Advocacy* 33:1-10.
- Blommaert, J. and Bulcaen, C. 2000. "Critical discourse analysis", *Annual Review of Anthropology*: 447-466.

Bibliography

- Borum, B. 2011. "Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: a review of social science theories", *Journal of Strategic Security* 4 (4): 7–36.
- Botha, A. and M. Abdile. 2014. "Radicalisation and al-Shabaab Recruitment in Somalia." Institute for Security Studies Papers (266).
- Bouissac, P. 2010. *Saussure: A Guide for the Perplexed*. New York: Continuum.
- Burton, R. F. 2014. *First footsteps in east Africa; or, an exploration of Harar*. Courier Dover Publications.
- Bradbury, M. 2008. *Becoming Somaliland*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Brinkerhoff, J. M. 2006. 'Digital diasporas and conflict prevention: the case of Somalinet.com.' *Review of International Studies* 32 (01):25-47.
- Bryden, M. 2003. "The" Banana Test": is Somaliland ready for recognition?" *Annales d'Ethiopie*. (Editions de la Table Ronde) 19 (1).
- Bryden, M. 2014. "The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: Strategy of Choice or Necessity?" Washington, DC: Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS): http://csis.org/files/publication/140221_Bryden_ReinventionOfAlShabaab_Web.pdf
- Calhoun, C. 1993. *Civil Society and the Public Sphere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cassanelli, L. 2015. "Hosts and Guests: a Historical Interpretation of Land Conflicts in Southern and Central Somalia." RVI Research Paper: Rift Valley Institute. <http://www.riftvalley.net/publication/hosts-and-guests#.Vdm91peYGJI>
- Cassanelli, L. and Abdikadir, F. S. 2008. "Somalia: Education in Transition." *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies* 7 (1): 91-125.
- Cassanelli, L. 2010. "Speculations on the historical origins of the 'Total Somali Genealogy'" in *Milk and Peace, Drought and War: Somali Culture, Society and Politics*, edited by Hoehne M. and V. Luling, 51-66. London: Hurst.
- Chabal, P. and Daloz, J.-P. 2006. *Culture Troubles: Politics and the Interpretation of Meaning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cherstich, I. 2014. "When Tribesmen do not act Tribal: Libyan Tribalism as Ideology (not as Schizophrenia)." *Middle East Critique* 23.4: 405-421.
- Clarke, W. and Herbst, J. 1996. "Somalia and the future of humanitarian intervention". *Foreign Affairs* 75: 70-85.
- Collet, B. A. 2007. "Islam, National Identity and Public Secondary Education: perspectives from the Somali diaspora in Toronto, Canada." *Race Ethnicity and Education* 10 (2):131-153.
- Compagnon, D. 1995. *Ressources Politiques, Regulation Autoritaire et Domination Personnelle en Somalie* [Political Resources, Authoritarian Regulation and Personal Domination in Somalia]. Pau: Francois Constantin Publisher.
- Compagnon, D. 1998. "Somali armed units: The interplay of political entrepreneurship and clan-based factions" in *African Guerrillas*, edited by Clapham, C. 73-90. London: James Currey.
- Coplan, D. 2010. "Introduction: From empiricism to theory in African border studies." *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 25 (2):1-5.
- Contini, P. 1969. *The Somali Republic: An Experiment in Legal Integration*. London: Routledge.
- Crossley, N. and J.M. Roberts (eds). 2004. *After Habermas: new perspectives on the public sphere*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.
- De Sousa Santos, B. 2013. "Public Sphere and Epistemologies of the South." *Africa Development* 37 (1):43–67.
- De Waal, A. 2007. "Class and Power in a Stateless Somalia." *Social Science Research Council* 20: <http://hornofafrica.ssrc.org/dewaal/>
- De Waal, A. (ed). 2004. *Islamism and its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*. London: Hurst.
- De Waal, A. 2015. *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, War and the Business of Power*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Declich, F. 1995 "Identity, Dance and Islam among People with Bantu origin" in *The Invention of Somalia*, edited by Ahmed, A.J. 81-106, Trenton: The Red Sea Press.
- Dittmer, J. 2013. "Humour at the Model United Nations: the role of laughter in constituting geopolitical assemblages". *Geopolitics* 18 (3): 493-513.
- Dittmer, J. and K. Dodds. 2008. "Popular Geopolitics Past and Future: Fandom, identities and audiences." *Geopolitics* 13 (3):437-457.

Bibliography

- Dodds, K. 1996. "The 1982 Falklands War and a Critical Geopolitical Eye: Steve Bell and the If . . . cartoons" *Political Geography* 15: 571-92
- Dodds, K. 2010. 'Popular Geopolitics and Cartoons: Representing Power Relations, Repetition and Resistance.' *Critical African Studies* 2 (4):113-131.
- Dodds, K. and P. Kirby. 2013. 'It's Not a Laughing Matter: critical geopolitics, humour and unlaughter.' *Geopolitics* 18 (1):45-59.
- Doornbos, M., and J. Markakis. 1994. "Society and State in Crisis: what went wrong in Somalia?" *Review of African Political Economy* 21: 82-88.
- Ducaale, Y. B. 2006. *Diiwaanka Maansada Cabdillahi Suldaan Maxamed* [A Collection of the Poems of Cabdillahi Suldan Maxamed]. Addis Ababa: Flamingo Printing Press.
- Dunn, K. C. 2009. "'Sons of the Soil' and Contemporary State Making: autochthony, uncertainty and political violence in Africa". *Third World Quarterly* 30 (1): 113-127.
- Ekeh, P. P. 1975. "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A theoretical statement", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*: 17(01): 91-112.
- Eko, L. 2010. "The Art of Criticism: How African cartoons discursively constructed African media realities in the post-Cold War era." *Critical African Studies* 2 (4):65-91.
- Eno, O. A., Eno, M. A., and Van Lehman, D. 2010. "Defining the Problem in Somalia: Perspectives from the Southern Minorities." *Journal of the Anglo-Somali Society* (47): 19-30
- Elmi, A. A. 2010. *Understanding the Somali Conflagration: Identity, Political Islam and Peacebuilding*. London: Pluto Press.
- Esser, D. E. 2014. "Security scales: spectacular and endemic violence in post-invasion Kabul, Afghanistan." *Environment and Urbanization*, 26(2): 373-388.
- Falah, G. C. Flint, and V. Mamadouh. 2006. "Just War and Extraterritoriality: The popular geopolitics of the United States' war on Iraq as reflected in newspapers of the Arab World." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96 (1):142-164.
- Fairclough, N. 2001. "The Discourse of New Labour: Critical discourse analysis." In *Discourse as data: A guide for analysis* edited by Wetherell, M. S. Taylor, and S. J. Yates 229-266 London: Sage.
- Feldman, B. 2007. "Somalia: Amidst the Rubble, a Vibrant Telecommunications Infrastructure." *Review of African Political Economy* 34 (113) 565-572.
- Fine, G.A. 1993. "Ten Lies of Ethnography." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 22 (3): 267-294.
- Fordred, L. 1997. "Natal Cockroaches Fly: Khaba Mkhize and communitarian journalism in Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa." In *Cultural producers in perilous states: Editing events, documenting change. Vol. 4*. Edited by Marcus, G. E. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Frederiksen, B. F. 2006. "'The Present Battle is the Brain Battle': writing and publishing a Kikuyu newspaper in the pre-Mau Mau Period in Kenya." in *Africa's Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self*. Edited by Barber, K. 278-313. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Gallaugh, J. and Ransbotham, S. 2010. "Social Media and Customer Dialog Management at Starbucks". *MIS Quarterly Executive*, 9(4): 197-212.
- Geertz, C. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- Georgiou, M. 2006. *Diaspora, Identity and the Media: Diasporic Transnationalism and Mediated Spatialities*. Cresskill: Hampton Press.
- Geschiere, P and Nyamnjoh, F. 2000 "Capitalism and Autochthony: The Seesaw of Mobility and Belonging". *Public Culture*, 12 (2): 423-452.
- Geschiere, P. 2009. *The Perils of Belonging: Autochthony, Citizenship, and Exclusion in Africa and Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Habermas, J. 1991. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Habermas, J. 1985. *The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason. Vol. 2*. Boston: Beacon press.
- Hagmann, T. and Hoehne, M.V. 2009. "Failures of the state failure debate: evidence from the Somali territories." *Journal of International Development*, 21(1):42-57.

Bibliography

- Hafez, K. 2008. *Arab Media: power and weakness*. New York: Continuum.
- Hall, S., Hobson, D., Lowe, A. and Willis, P. (eds). 1980. *Culture, Media, Language*. London: Hutchinson.
- Hammett, D. 2010. "Political Cartoons, Post-Colonialism and Critical African Studies." *Critical African Studies* 2 (4):1-26.
- Hammett, D. 2011. "Resistance, power and geopolitics in Zimbabwe." *Area* 43 (2):202-210.
- Hammond, L. 2015. "Diaspora Returnees to Somaliland: heroes of development or job-stealing scoundrels?" in *Africa's return migrants: The new developers?* edited by Åkesson L. and M. Eriksson Baaz. 44-63. London: Zed Books.
- Hammond, L. 2013. "Somalia Rising: Things are Starting to Change for the World's Longest Failed State." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 7 (1): 183-193.
- Hansen, P. 2007. "Revolving Returnees. Meanings and Practices of Transnational Return among Somalilanders." Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, Institute of Anthropology (Doctoral dissertation, unpublished).
- Hansen, S. J. 2013. *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012*. London: Hurst.
- Hardt-Mautner, G. 1995. "Only Connect: Critical Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics" University of Lancaster: <http://ucrel.lancaster.ac.uk/papers/techpaper/vol6.pdf>
- Harrow, K. W. and Ekotto, F. (eds). 2015. *Rethinking African Cultural Production*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hegghammer, T. 2009. "Jihadi-Salafis or Revolutionaries? On religion and politics in the study of militant Islamism." In *Global Salafism: Islam's new religious movement*, edited by R. Meijer, 244-266. London: Hurst.
- Helander, B. 1997. "Clanship, Kinship and Community Among the Rahanweyn: A Model for Other Somalis" in *Mending Rips in the Sky: Options for Somali Communities in the 21st Century*, edited by Adam, H. M. and Ford R. Trenton: Red Sea Press.
- Herbst, J. 1989. "The Creation and Maintenance of National Boundaries in Africa." *International Organization* 43 (4):673-692.
- Heritage Institute Report, April 2015, "*Caqabadaha Waxbarasho ee Soomaaliya kaddib Kumeelgaarkii: Eegid Muqdisho*" [Educational Challenges in Post Transitional Somalia]: <http://www.heritageinstitute.org/educational-challenges-in-post-transitional-somalia-case-study-mogadishu/>
- Heritage Institute report, December 2014, "Attitudes towards democracy: Mogadishu" (English and Somali) versions: <http://www.heritageinstitute.org/attitudes-towards-democracy-mogadishu/>
- Hesse, B. J. 2010. "Introduction: The Myth of 'Somalia'." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 28 (3):247-59.
- Hill, M. 2010. "No Redress: Somalia's Forgotten Minorities." Minority Rights Group International: <http://www.minorityrights.org/10370/reports/no-redress-somalias-forgotten-minorities.html>
- Hills, M. 2002. *Fan Cultures*. London: Routledge.
- Hirschkind, C. 2006. "Cassette Ethics: public piety and popular media in Egypt." In *Religion, Media, and the Public Sphere*, edited by Meyer, B., and A. Moors, 29-52. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hoehne, M. V. 2015. *Between Somaliland and Puntland: Marginalization, militarization and conflicting political visions*, RVI Contested Borderlands. Nairobi: Rift Valley Institute.
- Hoehne, M. V. 2013. "Limits of Hybrid Political Orders: the case of Somaliland." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 7 (2):199-217.
- Hoehne, M. V. 2009. "Mimesis and Mimicry in Dynamics of State and Identity Formation in Northern Somalia." *Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute* 79 (2):252-281.
- Hoehne, M. V. 2008. "Newspapers in Hargeysa: freedom of speech in post-conflict Somaliland." *Africa Spectrum* 43(1): 91-113.
- Hoehne, M. V. 2014. "Resource Conflict and Militant Islamism in the Golis Mountains in Northern Somalia (2006–2013)." *Review of African Political Economy* (ahead of print):1-16.
- Hoehne, M. V. 2016. "The Rupture of Territoriality and the Diminishing Relevance of Cross-cutting Ties in Somalia after 1990." *Development and Change*, 47(6): 1379-1411.

Bibliography

- Horst, C. 2006. "In 'Virtual Dialogue' With the Somali Community: The Value of Electronic Media for Research amongst Refugee Diasporas." *Refuge: Canada's Periodical on Refugees* 23 (1): 51-57
- Human Rights Watch report 2016. "Like Fish in Poisonous Waters: Attacks on media freedom in Somalia.": <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/05/02/fish-poisonous-waters/attacks-media-freedom-somalia>
- Human Rights Watch report 2008. "So Much to Fear: War crimes and the devastation of Somalia.": <https://www.hrw.org/report/2008/12/08/so-much-fear/war-crimes-and-devastation-somalia>
- Human Rights Watch statement August 18, 2015, "Somalia: AU Forces Linked to Wedding Killings.": <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/08/13/somalia-au-forces-linked-wedding-killings>
- Hunter, E. 2015. *Political Thought and the Public Sphere in Tanzania*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hweio, H. 2012. "Tribes in Libya: From social organization to political power." *African Conflict & Peacebuilding Review* 2.1: 111-121.
- Ibironke, O. 2015. 'African Writers Challenge Conventions of Postcolonial Literary History.' in Ekotto, F. and Harrow, K. eds. *Rethinking African Cultural Production* 29-51. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada report, November 2013, "Situation of practitioners of Sufism in Mogadishu; incidents of violence involving al Shabaab [Al-Shabaab] and practitioners of Sufism; security situation and availability of state protection in Mogadishu" [SOM104995.E] http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/299654/422239_en.html
- Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Security Sector Program and Sahar Foundation report, March 2016. "Al Shabaab as a Transnational Security Threat": http://igad.int/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1413:igad-ssp-officially-launch-the-al-shabaab-as-a-transnational-security-threat-report&catid=45:peace-and-security&Itemid=128
- International Crisis Group, October 5, 2015 "Somaliland: the strains of success". Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°113 Nairobi/Brussels: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somaliland/somaliland-strains-success>
- Ingiriis, M.H. 2013. Review Essay: Clan Cleansing in Somalia: The Ruinous Legacy of 1991 (Kapteijns). *Journal of the Anglo-Somali Society*, 54, 61-63.
- Issa-Salwe, A. M. 2008. "The Internet and the Somali Diaspora: The Web as a Means of Expression." *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies* 6 (1): 54-67 <http://digitalcommons.maclester.edu/bildhaan/vol6/iss1/8>
- Jama, M. J. 2016. "Somali Corpus: state of the art, and tools for linguistic analysis" Redsea Cultural Foundation's Somali Corpus project paper, Hargeysa: <http://www.somalicorpus.com/documents/JamaMusse-J-Somali-Corpus-StateOfTheArt.pdf>
- Jenkins, T. 1994. "Fieldwork and the Perception of Everyday Life." *Man* 29 (2):433-455.
- Johnson, J.W. 1974. *Heellooy, Heelleellooy: the development of the genre heello in modern Somali poetry*, Indiana University Publications African Series (5).
- Kapchits, G. 2015. "Towards the socio-linguistic situation in Southern Somalia" Paper presented at the 12th Somali Studies International Association Congress, Helsinki, 19-23 August 2015.
- Kapteijns, L. 1995. "A Pioneering Work on Somali Drama: Maxamed Daahir Afrax's Fan-Masraxeedka Soomaalida" *Northeast African Studies* 2 (1): pp. 175-180.
- Kapteijns, L. 2012. *Clan Cleansing in Somalia: The Ruinous Legacy of 1991*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Kapteijns, L. 2009. "Discourse on moral womanhood in Somali popular songs, 1960–1990." *The Journal of African History*, 50(01): 101-122.
- Kapteijns, L. 2004. "I.M. Lewis and Somali clanship: A critique." *Northeast African Studies*, 11(1): 1-23.
- Kapteijns, L. 2010. "Making Memories of Mogadishu in Somali poetry about the civil war" in *Mediations of Violence in Africa*, edited by Kapteijns, L. and A Richters. 25-74. Leiden: Brill.
- Kapteijns, L. 2012. "Mohamud Siad Togane" In *Dictionary of African Biography*, edited by Gates, H. L. and E. K. Akyeampong. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kasfir, N. 1998. "Civil society, the State and Democracy in Africa", *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 36(2): 123-48.

Bibliography

- Keen, D. 2000. "Incentives and Disincentives for Violence." In *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*, edited by Berdal M. and D. Malone. 19-42. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Kepel, G. 2006. *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*. London: IB Tauris.
- Kirk, M. 2011. *Ending Somali Piracy Against American and Allied Shipping*: Diane Publishing.
- Kitzinger, J. 1994. "The Methodology of Focus Groups: the importance of interaction between research participants." *Sociology of health and illness* 16 (1):103-121.
- Kusow, A. M. and Bjork, S. R. (eds). 2007. *From Mogadishu to Dixon: The Somali Diaspora in a Global Context*. Lawrenceville: Red Sea Press.
- Kusow, A. M. (ed). 2004. *Putting the Cart before the Horse: Contested Nationalism and the Crisis of the Nation-State in Somalia*. New Jersey: Red Sea Press.
- Kusow, A. M. 1995. "The Somali Origin: Myth or Reality" in *The Invention of Somalia*, edited by Ahmed, A.J. 81-106, Trenton: The Red Sea Press.
- Laitin, D. D. and Samatar, S. S. 1987. *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Laitin, D.D. 1977. *Politics, Language, and Thought: The Somali experience*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lamberti, M. 1986. *Die Somali-Dialekte*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske.
- Landinfo (Country of Origin Information Centre). 2011 *Somalia: Language Situation and Dialects*. Report: Oslo.
- Lewis, D. 2002. "Civil Society in African Contexts: Reflections on the Usefulness of a Concept", *Development and Change*, 33(4), 2002:569–586.
- Lewis, I.M. 1994. *Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society*. Lawrenceville: Red Sea Press.
- Lewis, I.M. 1998. "Doing Violence to Ethnography: A Response to Catherine Besteman's" Representing Violence and 'Othering' Somalia." *Cultural anthropology* 13 (1):100-108.
- Lewis, I.M. 1957/1978. "The Somali lineage system and the total genealogy: a general introduction to basic principles of Somali political institutions." *Colonial Social Science Research Council/Ann Arbor: University Microfilms*.
- Lewis, I.M. 2008. *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland: culture, history, society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lewis, I. M. 2004. "Visible and Invisible Differences: The Somali Paradox" *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 74, (4): 489-515.
- Lindley, A. 2008. "Transnational Connections and Education in the Somali Context." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 2 (3):401-414.
- Little, P. D. 2003. *Somalia: Economy Without a State*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Lucaites, J. and Condit, C. 1985. "Re-constructing Narrative Theory: A Functional Perspective", *Journal of Communication* 35 (4): 90-108.
- Luling, V. 1997. "Come back Somalia? Questioning a collapsed state." *Third World Quarterly* 18 (2):287-302.
- Luling, V. 2006. "Genealogy as Theory, Genealogy as Tool: Aspects of Somali 'Clanship'." *Social Identities* 12 (4): 471-85.
- Lynch, M. 2011. "After Egypt: The limits and promise of online challenges to the authoritarian Arab state", *Perspectives on Politics*, 9 (2): 301-310.
- Macpherson, H. 2008. "'I Don't Know Why They Call It the Lake District They Might as Well Call It the Rock District!': The Workings of Humour and Laughter in Research with Members of Visually Impaired Walking Groups", *Environment and Planning: Society and Space* 26(6):1080-1095
- Mahmood, S. 2005. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic revival and the feminist subject*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Marchal, R. 1997. "Lower Shabelle Region Study on Governance." Nairobi: United Nations Development Office for Somalia: 43.
- Marchal, R. 2010. "The Puntland State of Somalia: a tentative social analysis." Paris: Sciences Po.
- Marchal, R. 2011. "The Rise of a Jihadi Movement in a Country at War—Harakat Al-Shabaab Al Mujaheddin in Somalia." Paris: Sciences Po.

- <http://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/en/content/rise-jihadi-movement-country-war-harakat-al-shabaab-al-mujaheddin-somalia>
- Mason, A.J., 2010. "The Cannibal Ogre and the Rape of Justice: A contrapuntal view". *Critical African Studies*, 2(4): 32-64.
- Mbembé, J-A. 2001. *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- McGown, R. B. 1999. *Muslims in the Diaspora: the Somali communities of London and Toronto*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Medvedev, P.N. and M.M. Bakhtin. 1985. *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Meleagrou-Hitchens, A., S. Maher, and J. Sheehan. 2012. "Lights, Camera, Jihad: Al-Shabaab's Western Media Strategy." International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence: http://www.trackinterrorism.org/sites/default/files/chatter/ICSR-Lights-Camera-Jihad-Report_Nov2012_ForWeb-2_0.pdf
- Menkhaus, K. 2010. "Ethnicity in Somali Studies: The Case of Somali Bantu Identity." In *Peace and Milk, Drought and War: Somali Culture, Society and Politics*, edited by M. Hoehne and V. Luling, 87-104. London: Hurst & Co.
- Menkhaus, K. 2002. "Political Islam in Somalia." *Middle East Policy* 9 (1): 109-23.
- Menkhaus, K. 2016. "Non-State Security Providers and Political Formation in Somalia. In Non-state security providers project" Report for Centre for Security Governance.
- Meyer, B., and A. Moors (eds.) 2006. *Religion, Media, and the Public Sphere*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Meyer, B. & Geschiere, P. (eds.) 1999. *Globalization and Identity: Dialectics of Flow and Closure*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Mire A, C. *Kobocii Islaamiyiinta Soomaaliya* [Rise of the Islamists in Somalia]. Nairobi: Graphic Lineups, 2013.
- Morozov, E. 2012. *The Net Delusion: The dark side of Internet freedom*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Mosley, J. 2015. "Somalia's Federal Future: Layered Agendas, Risks and Opportunities" Horn of Africa Project report: Chatham House: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/somalias-federal-future-layered-agendas-risks-and-opportunities>
- Müller, M. 2008. 'Reconsidering the Concept of Discourse for the Field of Critical Geopolitics: Towards discourse as language and practice.' *Political Geography* 27 (3):322-338.
- Mwangi, O. G. 2010. "The Union of Islamic Courts and Security Governance in Somalia." *African Security Review* 19 (1): 88-94.
- National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ) Annual Report 2014 "Press Freedom at Risk in Somalia: Murder, Imprisonment, Censorship and Bad Laws": http://www.ifex.org/somalia/2015/01/13/somalia_annualreport_2014.pdf
- Neumann, P. R. 2013. "The Trouble with Radicalization." *International Affairs*, 89(4): 873-893.
- Noyes, J. 2013. *The Politics of Iconoclasm: Religion, Violence and the Culture of Image-breaking in Christianity and Islam*. London: IB Tauris.
- Nurhussein, S. 2008. "Global Networks, Fragmentation, and the Rise of Telecommunications in Stateless Somalia." University of Oregon (unpublished PhD thesis).
- Ó Tuathail, G. 1996. *Critical Geopolitics*. London: Routledge.
- Ó Tuathail, G. 2006. 'General Introduction: Thinking Critically about Geopolitics', in *The Geopolitics Reader* edited by Ó Tuathail, G. S. Dalby and P. Routledge 1-15. London: Routledge.
- Obadare, E. 2009. 'The Uses of Ridicule: Humour, 'infrapolitics' and civil society in Nigeria.' *African Affairs* 108 (431):241-261.
- Obadare, E., and Willems, W. (eds.) 2014. *Civic Agency in Africa: Arts of Resistance in the 21st Century*. London: James Currey.
- Olden, A. 1999. "Somali Refugees in London: Oral culture in a western information environment." *Libri-Copenhagen* 49 (4):212-224.
- Orwin, M. and M. C. Riiraash. 1997. "An approach to relationships between Somali metre types." *African Languages and Cultures*, 10 (1): 83-100.
- Omaar, R. & De Waal, A. 1993. *Land Tenure, the Creation of Famine, and the Prospects for Peace in Somalia* (No. 1). London: African Rights.

- Osman, I. 2015. "The Somali Media, Diaspora communities and the concept of conflict recreation." *JOMEC Journal: Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies*: Cardiff University Press.
- Phillips, S. 2013. "Political Settlements and State Formation: The case of Somaliland." Development Leadership Program Research Paper 23:
<http://www.dlprog.org/publications/political-settlements-and-state-formation-the-case-of-somaliland.php>
- Pillai, P. 1992. "Rereading Stuart Hall's Encoding/Decoding Model." *Communication Theory* 2 (3): 221-233.
- Postman, N. 1979. "Teaching as a Conserving Activity." *Instructor* 89 (4): 38-42.
- Renders, M. 2012. *Consider Somaliland: State-building with traditional leaders and institutions*. Leiden: Brill.
- Renders, M. 2007. "Appropriate 'Governance-Technology'? Somali Clan Elders and Institutions in the Making of the 'Republic of Somaliland'." *Africa Spectrum* 41 (3):439-459.
- Ridanpää, J. 2009. "Geopolitics of Humour: the Muhammed cartoon crisis and the Kaltio comic strip episode in Finland." *Geopolitics* 14 (4):729-749.
- Rift Valley Institute/Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, 2017. "Land Matters in Mogadishu: Settlement, ownership and displacement in a contested city" Joint report, Nairobi, 13 April 2017.
- Rubin, H. J. and I. S. Rubin. 2011. *Qualitative Interviewing: The art of hearing data*. London: Sage.
- Said, E. 1994. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage.
- Sakr, N. 2007. *Arab Television Today*. London: IB Tauris.
- Salvatore, A. and O. Schmidtke. 2013 (eds) *Rethinking the Public Sphere through Transnationalizing Processes: Europe and beyond*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Samatar, A. I. 2016. *Africa's First Democrats*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Samatar, A. I. 2011. "Debating Somali Identity in a British Tribunal: The Case of the BBC Somali Service." *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies* 10 (1):36-88.
- Samatar, A. I. 1992. "Destruction of State and Society in Somalia: Beyond the tribal convention." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 30 (4):625-641.
- Samatar, A.I. 1989. *The State and Rural Transformation in Northern Somalia, 1884-1986*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Samatar, S. S. 1991. *A Nation in Turmoil*. London: The Minority Rights Group.
- Samatar, S. S. 1982. *Oral Poetry and Somali Nationalism: The Case of Sayid Mahammad'Abdille Hasan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Samatar, S. S. 2009. "Somalia: A Nation's Literary Death Tops Its Political Demise." *Wardheer News*.
- Schmied, J., and D. Hudson-Ettle. 1996. "Analyzing the style of East African newspapers in English." *World Englishes* 15 (1):103-113.
- Schulz, D. E. 2006. "Morality, Community, Publicness: Shifting Terms of Public Debate in Mali." In *Religion, Media, and the Public Sphere*, edited by Meyer, B., and A. Moors, 132-151. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Semati, M. 2012. "The Geopolitics of Parazit, the Iranian Televisual Sphere, and the Global Infrastructure of Political Humor." *Popular Communication* 10 (1-2):119-130.
- Sharif, A. 2015. "Islamic Educational Networks in the Aftermath of State Collapse." Paper presented at 12th Somali Studies International Association Congress, Helsinki, 19-23 August 2015.
- Sheekh-Cabdillaahi 'Gadhweyne', R. (ed). 2009. *War and Peace: An anthology of Somali literature/Suugaanta Nabadda iyo Colaadda*. London/Pisa: Progressio/Ponte Invisible.
- Sheik-Abdi, A. 1993. *Divine Madness: Mohammed Abdulle Hassan (1856-1920)*: London/New Jersey: Zed Books
- Shotter, J. 1993. *Cultural Politics of Everyday Life: Social constructionism, rhetoric and knowing of the third kind*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Siltanen, J. & M. Stanworth (eds). 1984. *Women and the Public Sphere: a Critique of Sociology and Politics*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Silverstein, M. & G. Urban (eds). 1996. *Natural Histories of Discourse*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bibliography

- Skjerdal, T. S. 2011. 'Journalists or Activists? Self-identity in the Ethiopian diaspora online community.' *Journalism* 12 (6):727-744.
- Spivak, G. C. 1988. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Edited by Cary, N. and L. Grossberg. 271-313. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Spivak, G. C. 2003. "Subaltern studies." *Deconstruction: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* 4: 220-243.
- Stremlau, N. 2013. "Hostages of Peace: the politics of radio liberalization in Somaliland." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 7 (2):239-257.
- Stremlau, N. Fantini, E. and R. M Osman. 2015. "The Political Economy of the Media in the Somali Conflict." *Review of African Political Economy* 43 (147): 43-57.
- Thrift, N. 2000. "It's the Little Things." In *Geopolitical Traditions: a Century of Geopolitical Thought* edited by Dodds, K. and Atkinson, D. 380-87. London: Routledge.
- Tiilikainen, M. 2011. "Failed Diaspora: Experiences of Dhaqan Celis and Mentally Ill Returnees in Somaliland" *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 20(1): 71-89.
- Tiilikainen, M. 2010. "Spirits in the human world in Northern Somalia" in *Milk and Peace, Drought and War: Somali Culture, Society and Politics*, edited by M. Hoehne and V. Luling, 163-184. London: Hurst & Co.
- United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, report, 12 July 2013: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2013/413
- United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, Eritrea report, 20 October 2015: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/802
- Verjee, A., Abokar, A. Y., Haroon, Y. A., Warsame, A. M., Farah, M.A. and Hersi, M. F. 2015. *The Economics of Elections in Somaliland*. Nairobi: Rift Valley Institute.
- Vidino, L., Pantucci, R. and E. Kohlmann. 2010. "Bringing Global Jihad to the Horn of Africa: Al Shabaab, Western fighters, and the Sacralization of the Somali Conflict." *African Security* 3 (4):216-238.
- Van Linschoten, A. S. and F. Kuehn. 2012. *The Poetry of the Taliban*. London: Hurst.
- Walls, M., and S. Kibble. 2011. "Somaliland: Change and continuity." Progressio Report: www.progressio.org.uk/sites/default/files/Somaliland-elections-2010-report.pdf
- Webersik, C. 2005. "Fighting for the Plenty: the banana trade in southern Somalia." *Oxford Development Studies* 33 (1):81-97.
- Wedeen, L. 2002. "Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for political science." *American Political Science Review* 96 (04):713-728.
- Wedeen, L. 2008. *Peripheral Visions: Publics, power, and performance in Yemen*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wekesa, N. B. 2012. "Cartoons Can Talk? Visual analysis of cartoons on the 2007/2008 post-election violence in Kenya: A visual argumentation approach" *Discourse & Communication* 6 (2) 223-238.
- Wendt, A. 1999. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Werner, W. 2003. "Reading Visual Rhetoric: Political cartoons." *International Journal of Social Education*: 18 (1):81-97.
- Wiktorowicz, Q. 2006. "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29 (3): 207-39.
- Willems, W. 2013. "Interrogating Public Sphere and Popular Culture as Theoretical Concepts on their Value in African Studies." *Africa Development* 37 (1):11-26.
- Williams, P. D. 2016. "AMISOM under Review", *The Royal United Services Institute Journal*, 161(1): 40-49.
- Wimmer, A. and N. Glick Schiller. 2002. "Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: nation-state building, migration and the social sciences." *Global Networks* 2 (4):301-334.
- Wodak, R. "Critical Discourse Analysis" In *Qualitative Research Practice* edited by Seale, C., G. Gobo, J. Gubriem, D. Silverman. 185-204. London: Sage, 2004.
- Wolfe, Thomas C. 1997. "The Most Invisible Hand: Russian journalism and media context" in *Cultural Producers in Perilous States: Editing Events, Documenting Change* Vol. 4. Edited by Marcus, G. E. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Xaashi, M. C. 2014. *Aafada Qabyaaladda* [The Catastrophe of Clanism]. Hargeysa: Bilan.

Bibliography

- Yetbarek, T. 2017 "Language-use of Somalis in Dollo Ado Refugee Camp: Sociolinguistics Study of Communications" paper delivered at Hargeysa International Book Fair 2017, University of Hargeysa, July 2017 (PhD thesis forthcoming).
- Zapiro, 2010. "Letter to the South African Human Rights Commission: A response to complaints regarding my cartoon" *Critical African Studies*, 2(4): 27-31.
- Zeller, Wolfgang. 2013. "Special Issue: African Borderlands." *Critical African Studies* 5 (1)

Appendix

Appendix 1. Online sources (Somali and English-language news media)

All cited online sources include the name of author and date of publication where this has been listed (day, month and year, or, in some cases, month and year).

All online sources were last accessed and checked on June 28, 2016. If the site was not active on this date, the original date of access is given in parenthesis. The author has an archived copy of each cited website.

Official (online) reports are included in the bibliography.

The sources are listed here in the order they appear (as footnotes) in the thesis:

United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) 'Factsheet on Somalia's 2016 Election Process,' September 1, 2016: <https://unsom.unmissions.org/fact-sheet-somalia%E2%80%99s-2016-electoral-process>

Tristan McConnell, AFP, February 25, 2015, 'Firing squads, blast walls and dangerous diplomacy in Somalia' <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/firing-squads-blast-walls-dangerous-diplomacy-somalia-051302579.html>

BBC, February 17, 2015, '#BBCTrending: The Somali woman who's become a global star on Instagram' <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-31462954>

Integration TV (Youtube), 'Mogadishu series promo' January 21, 2015 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WOT5jg4uLE>

Safia Aidid, Africa is a Country, March 30, 2015, 'Can the Somali Speak, #Cadaanstudies', <http://africasacountry.com/2015/03/can-the-somali-speak-cadaanstudies/>

BBC, May 18, 2011: 'In pictures: Somaliland independence day' <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13445477> ; Die Zeit, August 30, 2012 'Sie life um ihr Leben'

Liban Ahmed, February 4, 2015, 'Biased Somali scholars eclipse warlords' The Daily Nation, Nairobi <http://www.nation.co.ke/oped/Opinion/Somalia-Intellectuals-Scholars-Diaspora-Disinformation/-/440808/2613300/-/lg1a5s/-/index.html>

Mohamed Hagi Mahamoud, 'The conspiracy scheme of Cadaanstudies' Somaliland Monitor, May 17, 2015 <http://somalilandmonitor.net/somaliland-the-conspiracy-scheme-of-cadaan-studies/4384/>

Salon, February 14, 2016 'Somalia's president: Many fight for al-Shabab for money' http://www.salon.com/2016/02/14/somalias_president_many_fight_for_al_shabab_for_money/

Mary Harper Twitter post, November 1, 2015, https://twitter.com/mary_harper ; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-34745495>

Andalus Radio, November 1, 2015, 'Idaacadda Andalus Oo Baahisay Codad Laga Duubay Walaalihii Fuliyey Howlgalkii Hotel Saxafi (WARBIXIN+COD)' [Andalus Radio broadcasts recording of the brothers who carried out the Hotel Saxafi operation [Report and Voice]] <http://radioandalus24.com/?p=5709> (accessed November 3, 2015)

Adam Mazmanian, FCW The Business of Federal Technology, February 13, 2015 'DOD shuts two 'influence' websites covering Africa': <https://fcw.com/articles/2015/02/13/african-web-sites.aspx>

Voice of Somalia.net, March 18, 2014, 'The Economist: Xasan Sheekh Si Musuq maasuq ah ayaa lagu soo doortay' [The Economist: Xasan Sheekh was elected through corrupt practices]

<http://voiceofsomalia.net/2014/03/18/the-economist-xasan-sheekh-si-musuuq-maasuq-ah-ayaa-lagu-soo-doortay/>

Somalimemo.net, June 27, 2014, '*Hay'adda ICG Al Shabaab Muruqa iyo Maalka Soomaalida Ayay Hanteen Mana Laga Adkaan Karo Warbixin*' [ICG Report states that Al Shabaab have muscle and finance of the Somalis and cannot be resisted] <http://somalimemo.net/articles/237/Hayadda-ICG-Al-Shabaab-Muruqa-iyo-Maalka-Soomaalida-Ayay-Hanteen-Mana-Laga-Adkaan-Karo-Warbixin>

Somalimemo.net, October 26, 2015 '*HRW Xad-gudub iyo Dayac daran ayay Wajahayaan Naafada Soomaaliya*' [Human Rights Watch: abuse and neglect facing the disabled in Somalia] <http://somalimemo.net/articles/3757/HRWXad-gudub-iyo-Dayac-daran-ayay-Wajahayaan-Naafada-Soomaaliya>

Jamal Osman, The Guardian, October 11, 2012 'Somali journalists are dying from corruption as much as conflict' <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/oct/11/somali-journalists-dying-corruption-conflict>

Shabelle News, Muqdisho, April 14, 2015 '*Weerar lagu qaaday Wasaaradda Hidaha iyo Tacliinta Sare*' [Attack launched against Ministry of Culture and Higher Education] <http://shabellenews.com/?p=3605>

Lajiide Online, April 20, 2015 '*Faah faahin: Qaraxii Shaqaalaha UN-ka ee Xafiiska Garowe iyo Al-Shabaab oo sheegatay*' [Info: bombing of UN staff at Garoowe office, Al Shabaab claim [responsibility]] <http://www.lajiide.com/index.php/soomaali/98-faah-faahin-qaraxii-shaqaalaha-un-ka-ee-xafiiska-garowe-iyo-al-shabaab-oo-sheegatay> (accessed April 29, 2015)

Horseed Media, February 21, 2015 '*Wasiirka Warfaafinta Puntland oo ka hadlay sababaha Hoos u dhaca Afka Soomaaliga (Dhageyso)*' [The Information Minister of Puntland speaks about the decline of the Somali language] <http://horseedmedia.net/2015/02/21/wasiirka-warfaafinta-puntland-oo-ka-hadlay-sababaha-hoos-u-dhaca-afka-soomaaliga/>

Cabdirisaaq Maxamed Axmed, Weedhsan.com, August 2015 (undated) '*HIBF: Dhaqan mise Dhaqan bi'in?*' [Hargeysa International Book Fair: Culture or the Smearing of It?] <http://www.weedhsan.com/index.php/qalinleyda-weedhsan/7390-hibf-dhaqan-mise-dhaqan-bi-in-w-q-cabdirisaaq-maxamed-axmed>

Afrikada.net, August 28, 2015 '*Degdeg: Tifaftiraha BBC-da ee Afrika Mary Harper oo loo haysto war ay ka sheegtay Muqdisho*' [Breaking: BBC Africa editor Mary Harper taken to task for news reported from Muqdisho] <http://afrikada.net/2015/08/28/deg-deg-tifaftiraha-bbc-da-ee-afrika-mary-harper-oo-loo-haysto-war-ay-ka-sheegtay-muqdisho/> (accessed September 5, 2015)

Caasimada Online, February 1, 2015 '*Arag sawiro laga soo qaaday taankiyo & gawaari casri ah oo saaran markabkii lagu qabtay dekedda Berbera dhowaan.*' [See pictures taken of tanks and modern vehicles from ship held in berbera port recently] <http://caasimadda.com/arag-sawiro-laga-soo-qaaday-qaar-kamid-ah-gaadiidkii-dagaal-ee-ku-rarnaa-markabka-berbera-kusoo-xirtay/>

Horseed Media, February 2, 2015 '*Somaliland oo hubkii Saarnaa Markabkii Berbera ku xirnaa la soo degtey!*' (Somaliland offloads weapons from ship impounded in Berbera) <https://horseedmedia.net/2015/02/02/somaliland-oo-hubkii-ka-dejisay-markabkii-hubka-sidey-ee-ku-xirtay-berbera/>

BBC Somali, February 8, 2015, '*Hiba Maxamed oo joojisay muusigga*' [Hiba Maxamed quits music], http://www.bbc.com/somali/maqaal_iyo_muuqaal/2015/02/150208_hiba_maxamed_hiba_nuura

Bashiir Mohamed, October 24, 2014 '*Qurba Joogta iyo Qaran Joogta Maxaa Kala Heysta!*' [What have diaspora people got to do with those who stayed in the nation]: <http://voiceofsomalia.net/2013/10/24/maqaal-qurba-joogta-iyo-qaran-joogta-maxaa-kala-heysta-qore-bashiir-mohamed/>

SNTV documentary, December 7, 2014 '*Barnaamij ku saabsan Shabakado Al-Shabaab ah oo la soo qabtay*' [Program about apprehended Al Shabaab networks] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEaiTnXcuXM>

Caasimadda Online, July 1, 2015, '*Daawo sawirada Al Shabaab oo soo bandhigay meydadka askarii Burundi ee lagu dilay Leego*' [See pictures that Al Shabaab has published of bodies of Burundian soldiers killed in Leego]: <http://caasimadda.com/daawo-sawirada-alshabaab-oo-soo-bandhigay-meydadka-askarii-burundi-ee-lagu-dilay-leego/>

Yuusuf Garaad's blogpost, reproduced on pro-Jihadi website *Voice of Somalia*, July 15, 2014 '*Saxaafadda iyo Sirdoonka*' [Journalists and the Intelligence Agencies] <http://voiceofsomalia.net/2014/07/15/saxaafadda-iyo-sirdoonkaqore-yusuf-garaad/>

Radio Kulmiye, Muqdisho, May 3, 2015 '*Warbaahinta Muqdisho oo laga dalbaday in ay Joojiyaan Isticmaalka Magaca Al-shabaab*' [Muqdisho Media requested to stop using the name 'Al Shabaab'] <http://radiokulmiye.com/knn/warbaahinta-muqdisho-oo-laga-dalbaday-in-ay-joojiyaan-isticmaalka-magaca-al-shabaab/> (accessed June 5, 2015).

Somalimemo online, October 2015, '*Dood Wadaag:Xildhibaan Xaqiijiyay in Somalia Gumeysi ku Jirto*' [Debate: MPs confirm that Somalia is under colonial rule] <http://somalimemo.net/play.php?action=video&id=20&do=video>

Raadreeb online, October 7, 2015, '*Wariyeyaashii ku xirnaa Muqdisho oo la sii daayey*' [Journalists held in Muqdisho released] <http://www.raadreeb.com/2015/10/07/wariyeyaashii-ku-xirnaa-muqdisho-oo-lasii-daayay/> (accessed 30 October, 2015)

VOA Somali, May 19, 2015, '*Puntland oo dib u Fasaxday TV-ga Dawladda Somalia*' [Puntland gives permission again for Somali Government TV [to operate]] <http://www.voasomali.com/content/article/2777271.html>

Jowhar.com: '*Dhalinyarada 17-ka degmo ee gobolka Banaadir oo isu soo baxay uga soo horjeedaan Al Shabaab ka dhigay Muqdisho*' [Youth of 17 districts of Banaadir region demonstrate together against Al Shabaab in Muqdisho] webpage no longer active, pictures in writer's archive. August 26, 2014.

Cabdullahi Ibrahim Cumar, Keyd Media, June 8, 2014, '*Taageerayaasha SNM iyo SSDF oo fuliyeey balanqaadyadii ay la galeen Xabashida*' [SNM and SSDF supporters fulfil the promise they made with the Xabash]: http://www.keydmedia.net/editorial/article/taageerayaasha_snm_ssdf_oo_fuliyeey_balanqaadyadii_ay_la_galeen_xabashida/ (accessed May 21, 2015). Article now available at: <http://caasimadda.com/taageerayaasha-snm-ssdf-oo-fuliyeey-balanqaadyadii-ay-la-galeen-xabashida%E2%80%8F/>

Radio Muqdisho, February 5, 2013, '*Maxkamada G/Banaadir oo xukun ku riday Wariye Koronto iyo haweeney loo haystay faafinta kufsi been abuur ah*' ['Banaadir Regional Court passes sentence on Journalist Koronto and woman held for spreading false news about rape'] <http://radiomuqdisho.net/archives/maxkamada-gbanaadir-oo-xukun-ku-riday-wariye-koronto-iyo-haweeney-loo-haystay-faafinta-kufsi-been-abuur-ah/>

BBC Somali.com, May 7, 2010, '*Amin Amir wuxuu BBC ku yiri 'Facebook anigu ma lihi'*' [Amin Amir tells the BBC that he does not have a Facebook page]: http://www.bbc.com/somali/news/story/2010/05/100507_amiin_caamir.shtml

Somalimemo.net, February 28, 2015, '*Sheikh Cali Dheere: Duulaanka dhanka akhlaaqda ah ayay gaaladu kusoo qaaday shacabka magaalada Muqdisho*' [Sheikh Cali Dheere [HMS Spokesman]: 'The infidels are leading an assault on good conduct against the population of Muqdisho'] <http://somalimemo.net/articles/2270/ShCali-Dheere-Duulaanka-Dhanka-Akhlaaqda-ah-Ayay-Gaaladu-Kusoo-Qaaday-Shacabka-Magaalada-Muqdisho>

Keyd Media, September 26, 2014, '*Wasiirada DFS oo curyaaminaaya mustaqbalka hablaha soo kacaya - dhaqan xumo!*' [SFG Ministers compromise the future of girls - bad behaviour]: http://www.keydmedia.net/news/article/wasiiradda_dfs_oo_curyaaminaaya_mustaqbalka_hablaha_so_o_kacaaya_-_dhaq

Universal TV, Interview with Amin Amir, uploaded onto UTV Youtube channel June 19, 2012: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIAMIDFZpeY>, extended version: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNR_b9n7ubQ

Halgan.net, April 9, 2015: 'Dowladda Federaalka Soomaaliya oo lacag dul dhigtay 11 hogaamiye oo ka tirsan Al-shabaab' [The Federal Government puts money on the head of 11 Al Shabaab leaders]: <http://halgan.net/2015/04/dowladda-federaalka-soomaaliya-oo-lacag-dul-dhigtay-11-hogaamiye-oo-ka-tirsan-al-shabaab/>

Guardian newspaper, 22 January 2016, 'Defiant Somalis condemn Al Shabaab beach attack': <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/22/somalia-lido-beach-mogadishu-tweetlidopictures-alshabaab>

Al Furqaan Media, 22 December 2015 'Soo Kabashada Janaale' [The recovery of Janaale], <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQt0hzU6Ku8>

Somalia Newsroom 3 December 2015: <http://somalianewsroom.com/2015/03/12/will-al-shabaab-follow-boko-haram-and-pledge-loyalty-to-isis/>

CNN, 21 February 2015 'Al Shabaab threatens Malls, some in US': <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/02/21/us/al-shabaab-calls-for-mall-attacks/>

Caasimadda.com, 1 July 2015, 'Daawo sawirada Al Shabaab oo soo bandhigay meydadka askarii Burundi ee lagu dilay Leego' [See Al Shabaab published pictures of corpses of Burundian soliders killed at Leego] <http://caasimadda.com/daawo-sawirada-alshabaab-oo-soo-bandhigay-meydadka-askarii-burundi-ee-lagu-dilay-leego/> (Graphic images)

Vice News 1 July 2015 'My Journey Inside the Islamic State' on the location of media producers in the Iraq/Syria context: <https://news.vice.com/article/my-journey-inside-the-islamic-state>

Jubaland Media.com October 22, 2015 'Garabka kooxda Al Shabaab ee Galgala oo sheegay inay ku biireen ISIS' (Al Shabaab faction in Galgala announces that they have joined ISIS) <http://jubalandmedia.com/2015/10/garabka-kooxda-al-shababa-ee-galgala-oo-sheegay-inay-ku-biireen-isis/>

Sola, February 17, 2016, 'Wada shaqeynta Somaliland iyo Al Shabaab ee la yiri waxaa soo qoray wariyaal Swedish ah maxaa ka jira? SOLA investigates' ['Cooperation between Somaliland and AlShabaab said to be written by Swedish journalists – what's it all about?' SOLA investigates] <http://solaportal.com/Archive/2016/2/56solaportal>

Horn Cable TV, March 15, 2016, 'Puntland Oo Xukuumada Somaliya Ku Eedaysay Galitaanka Alshabab Gudaha Puntland' ['Puntland accuses the Government of Somalia over the Al Shabaab incursion inside Puntland'] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1fpzutR2Ew>

Al Furqaan March 2014 'Qaabka loo sameeyo burjikada Ceelbuur' [How the stone stoves of Ceel Buur are made] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=myCwuND-ksQ>

Al Furqaan, December 2013 'Bulsho horumartay hagar daamadii hey'adaha kadib' [Development of society after the deception of the agencies] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wblzUXC04I>¹

Al Furqaan, January 2014, 'Mashruuca afurinta dadka sooman' [Project for the people breaking the fast] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paE-F46oO6k>

Somalimemo.net, 1 June 2015, 'Sheekh Xasan Turki oo Masuul Ka Ahaa Dilkii Baadri Salvadore Colombo Loogu Geystay Magaalada Muqdisho' [Sheikh Xasan Turki was responsible for the killing of Father Salvador Colombo in Muqdisho]: <http://somalimemo.net/articles/2931/Sheekh-Xasan-Turki-oo-Masuul-Ka-ahaa-Dilkii-Baadri-Salvador-Colombo-Loogu-Geystay-Magaalada-Muqdisho>

Guardian newspaper, 2 April 2015 'Al-Shabaab: from al-Qaida rejects to a fighting force of thousands': <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/02/al-shabaab-from-al-qaida-rejects-to-a-fighting-force-of-thousands>

Bashir M. Hersi, October 3, 2014 “*Wadaaddadii Soomaaliyeed ma UMAL ayaa ka haray?!*” [Of the Somali clerics, is it only Umal left?] <https://bilediraac.wordpress.com/2014/10/03/wadaaddadii-soomaaliyeed-ma-umal-ayaa-ka-haray/>

Salaf Media: Sheekh Umal’s condemnation, Youtube, September 20, 2014: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPh8eIM7srg>

Sabahi online: ‘Death penalty for apostasy not justifiable in Islam: Somali scholar’ October 30, 2014 <http://www.kasmaal.com/?p=795>

Xaashi Yassiin Cismaan, December 2013 ‘Waa wareeey!!’ [A call for help] <http://www.raxanreeb.com/2013/12/waa-wareeey-wq-xaashi-yaasiin-cismaan>

Alex De Waal, Foreign Policy, March 17, 2016, ‘Africa’s \$700 billion problem waiting to happen’ <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/03/17/africas-700-billion-problem-waiting-to-happen-ethiopia-horn-of-africa/>

Somaliland Live.com, March 16, 2013 ‘*Sheekh Aden Sunne Oo Sheegay in ay Hargeisa Joogaan Ragg Faafinaya Diinta Kiristanka*’ [Sheekh Aden Sunne says that there is a man in Hargeysa promoting Christianity] <http://somalilandlive.com/articles/3586/Sheekh-Aden-Sunne-Oo-Sheegay-in-ay-Hargeisa-Joogaan-Ragg-Faafinaya-Diinta-Kiristanka> (accessed March 17, 2013).

Cabdullahi Ibraahim, Keyd Media, 26 March 2015, ‘*Maamul Goboleedyadu ma Federaalka Itoobiya bay ka tirsan yihiin?*’ [Are the regional administrations just part of Federal Ethiopia?] <http://www.keydmedia.net/editorial/article/federaalkee-bay-ka-tirsan-yihiin-maamul-goboleedyada-itoobiya-mise-kan/>

Ainte and Meleagreu-Hitchens, the Daily Beast, March 15, 2016 ‘The Return of Al Shabaab’ <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/03/15/the-return-of-al-shabaab.html>

Somalimemo.net: Somali translation of Al Jazeera Report ‘Not yet Kenyan’, 2 April 2014 (no longer available online, copy in writer’s possession)

Somalimemo.net, October 12, 2015 ‘*Dhageyso – Beesha Jareerweyne iyo Wilaayada Islaamiga Shabelle Hoose oo kulan muhiim ah yeeshay*’ [Listen – Jareer Weyne community and Islamic Governorate of Lower Shabelle hold important meeting] <http://somalimemo.net/articles/3679/DhageysoBeesha-Jareer-Weyne-iyo-Wilaayada-Islaamiga-ShHoose-oo-Kulan-Muhiim-ah-Yeeshay>

Al Furqaan/Voice of Somalia, August 5, 2015 ‘*Taariikhda Dahabiga ah ee ay Beesha Biyamaal ku Leedahay la Halganka Gumeystihii Talyaani*’ [The golden history of the Biyamaal in the struggle against Italian colonialism] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvJxvPv47VE>

Radio Al Furqaan, January 2014, ‘*Daawo Sawirada Kulankii Dhex Maray Xarakada Mujaahidiinta Al-Shabaab Iyo Beesha H/Gidir.(Dhagayso)*’ [See pictures of meeting between AS and the Habir Gedir Community (Listen)] <http://radioalfurqaan.com/?p=10987> (accessed June 8, 2015).

Caballah Salaad ‘Kuugey’, Keyd Media online, August 2014, ‘*Soomaalinimada iyo dhibka kasoo gaaray Beesha Hawiye!*’ [Somaalinimo and the problems suffered by the Hawiye] <http://www.keydmedia.net/editorial/article/soomaalinimada-dhibka-kasoo-gaaray-hawiye/>

Keydmedia, December 2014, ‘*Prof Togane yiri Soomaali waxaa baabiiy Darood*’ [Prof. Togane says The Soomaali were destroyed by the Daarood] <http://www.keydmedia.net/news/article/prof.-togane-yiri-soomaali-waxaa-baabiiyay-daarood-cakaara-action-gr/>

Voice of Somalia, November 2013, ‘*Proff Togane: Habir Gedir iyo Abgaal dulmi ayay ku hayaan beelaha Biimaal iyo Jareer*’ [Prof. Togane: The Habir Gedir and Abgaal have oppressed the Biimaal and Jareer communities] <http://voiceofsomalia.net/2013/11/26/proff-togane-habar-gidir-iyo-abgaal-dulmi-ayay-ku-hayaan-beelaha-biimaal-iyo-jareer/>

Radio WidhWidh, December 2012, ‘*Caakara Action Group oo hal milyan iyo 3 boqol kun dollar gaarsiisey CabdiWeli*’ [The Cakaara Action Group delivers one million three hundred thousand

dollars to Cabdiweli] <http://www.radiowidhwidth.com/widhwidthnew/Radio/2014/12/cakaara-action-group-oo-hal-milyan-iy-3-boqol-kun-dollar-gaarsiyyey-cweli/> (accessed January 20, 2016)

Dr Saciid Muuse Maxamuud, Caasimadda, July 2014 ‘Soomaaliya Wey Dhimaneysaa Ismana Oga’ [Somalia is dying without it realising] <http://caasimadda.com/somalia-weey-dhimaneysaa-ismana-oga-shirqool-halis-ah-oo-loo-diyaariyey/>

Xaashi Yassin Cismaan, Somalitalk, September 2007, ‘War niman yohow Raggii meeye?’ [Hey, where are the Men amongst you?] <http://www.somalitalk.com/2007/sept/20sep107.html>

Cabdullahi Ibraahim, Keyd Media, 26 March 2015, ‘Maamul Goboleedyadu ma Federaalka Itoobiya bay ka tirsan yihiin?’ [Are the regional administrations just part of federal Ethiopia?] http://www.keydmedia.net/editorial/article/federaalkee_bay_katirsan_yihiin_maamul_goboleedyada_itoobiya_mise_kan/

Cabdulaahi Ibrahim Cumar, Keyd Media, 5 December 2014, ‘Itoobiya oo Dalkii loo gacan geliyey!’ [Ethiopia has had the country put into its hands!] http://www.keydmedia.net/editorial/article/ethiopia_oo_somalia_relation_loo_gacan_geliyey/

Hassan A Shire, Xogta Media, April 15, 2014 ‘Maamul Goboleedyada Somaalida: Boob Qabiil, Burbur Qaran, & Badheed Hub ururusi marlabaad’ [Regional administrations of Somalia: Clan looting, destruction of the nation, purposeful weapons collection for the second time] <http://www.xogtamedia.com/2014/09/02/maamul-goboleedyada-boob-qabiil-burbur-qaran-badheed-hub-ururusi-marlabaad/>

Adam Hajji Hussein, Somalitalk October 6, 2014 ‘Qabyaalad Federaaleedka Soomaaliya’ [The Federal Division of Somalia] <http://somalitalk.com/2014/10/06/qabyaalad-federaaleedka-soomaaliya/>

Goobjoog FM, August 25, 2014: <http://goobjoog.com/2014/08/25/farmaajo-maamul-goboleedyada-dowladdu-sameyso-waxa-ay-k-dhisanyihiin-qaab-qabiil/>

Keyd Media, August 20, 2014 ‘Dhageyso: Faysal Cali “Nikolas Kay waxuu rabaa in Soomaaliya laga maamulo Garoowe”’ [Listen: Faysal Cali: ‘Nicholas Kay wants Somalia to be governed from Garoowe’] http://www.keydmedia.net/news/article/soomaalilandnikolas_kay_waxaa_uu_wadaa_danaha_puntlanddhageyso

Cabdiqaadir Mamaxed Cismaan, Rajo News, August 3, 2014 ‘Puntlaaneey in la isfuro waxaa ka horeeysa in horey la isu qabay’ [Puntland’s divorce comes before the marriage] <http://rajonews.com/2014/08/03/puntlaaneey-in-la-isfuro-waxaa-ka-horeeysa-in-horey-la-isu-qabay/>

Axmed Sheekh Maxamed, Keyd Media online, June 14, 2014 ‘Dagaallada Shabeellaha yaa hurinaya?’ [who’s inciting the conflict in the Shabelles?] http://www.keydmedia.net/editorial/article/dagaallada_shabeellaha_yaa_hurinaya/

Caasimadda online, Muqdisho, February 21, 2015 ‘Xog: habkii loo fuliyey qaraxyadii Hotel Central + qabiiliisa’ [Information: the method and perpetrator of the Central Hotel attack + his [the bomber’s] clan]

Muuse Xaji Abees, Dunida Online, July 20, 2014 ‘Digniin culus ku socota xildhibaanada daarood’ [Strong warning to Darood MPs] <http://www.dunidaonline.com/index.php?id=12999>

Ahmed Yusuf Ahmed, Dunida Online, March 29, 2015 ‘Muuq-disho’ [Image of killing] <http://dunidaonline.com/index.php?id=14345>

Star TV, Hargeysa/London, June 25 2015, ‘Daawo: dooddii hogaamiyeyaasha xisbiyada Somaliland’ [Watch: debate between the party leaders of Somaliland] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwBl-ZXPKgg>

Radio Muqdisho, May 18 2015 ‘Ololaha talaalka ka hortaga UGUS oo galabta furmay’ [Campaign for inoculation against UGUS was commenced this afternoon] <http://www.radiomuqdisho.net/ololaha-talaalka-ka-hortaga-ugus-oo-galabta-furmay/>

Somalimemo.net, September 8, 2014, '*Gabay Ku Saabsan Asha-hiid Bi'idnillaahi Sheekh Abuu Zubeyr*' [Poem about the martyred Sheekh Abuu Zubeyr] <http://somalimemo.net/articles/894/Gabay-Ku-Saabsan-Asha-hiid-Biidnillaahi-Sheekh-Abuu-Zubeyr>

Al Jazeera International broadcast, July 2012 'Imposing Islamic Law: Somalia's Al Shabaab accept nothing else' available on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZJjN91idBM>

BBC Somali, March 25, 2010 '*Shabaab oo burburineysa qabrigii Shiikh Maxamed Biya Maaloow*' [Shabaab destroying tomb of Sheikh Maxamed Biya Maaloow] http://www.bbc.com/somali/news/story/2010/03/100325_sawirro_qabriga_biyomaaloow.shtml

The Star newspaper, Nairobi June 4, 2015 'Garissa Campus Terrorist was a Law Graduate' http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2015/04/06/garissa-campus-terrorist-was-a-law-graduate_c1113802 ;

BBC Somali Service, August 6, 2014 '*Faysal: Wiilku waa Wiilkeyga*' [Faysal: 'The boy is mine'] http://www.bbc.com/somali/maqaal_iyo_muuqaal/2014/08/140806_warabe

Somali National Television, February 5, 2016 '*Dilaaga Wariyaha – waa kuma Xasan Xanafi?*' [Journalist killer – who is Xasan Xanafi?] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-nGbpr0Wkc>

Justice 4 Journalists, March 28, 2016 '*Confessions of a killer*' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=egKm-ibQkM8>

Puntland Post, April 19 2016: '*maxaabiistii laga qabtay al shababkii Puntland soo weeraray oo waxbarasho loo bilaabay*' [Education program begins for prisoners taken from Al Shabaab [after] their attack on Puntland] <http://puntlandpost.net/2016/04/19/maxaabiistii-laga-qabtay-al-shababkii-puntland-soo-weeraray-oo-waxbarasho-loo-bilaabay/>

VOA Somali, May 6, 2015, '*Daacishta Soomaaliya oo taageero helaya*' [Daacish in Somalia gaining support] <http://www.voasomali.com/content/somalia-isis/3316314.html>

Somalia Newsroom, April 28, 2016 'Kenya reaches deal with Somali 'clan' leaders on border security' <https://somalianewsroom.com/2016/04/28/kenya-reaches-deal-with-somali-clan-leaders-on-border-security/>

Appendix 2. Print newspapers

Author retains hard copies (and translations) of all print articles cited. As with the online sources above, the print media is listed in order of its appearance in the thesis:

Ida Agoosto newspaper, Garoowe, February 28, 2015, '*Wasaaradda warfaafinta Dowladda Puntland oo dhagax dhigtay xarunta Dhaqanka ee Puntland*' [Minister of Information lays foundation stone for Puntland Cultural Centre]

Xaqiiqa Times newspaper, Muqdisho, January 27, 2015, '*Xafiisyada Dowladda oo Lagu Amray Adeegsiga Af Soomaaliga*' [Government Offices Ordered to use Somali].

Xog-doon newspaper, Muqdisho, January 31, 2014, '*Puntland oo ku eedeysay Somaliland inay taageerto xoogaga Al-Shabaab ee Galgala*', 'Puntland accuses Somaliland of supporting Al Shabaab in Galgala.'

Xaqiiqa Times newspaper, Muqdisho, April 10, 2014, '*Hanti-dhowrka Qaranka: Dib Baa Loo Eegayaa Heshiisyadii La Galay*' [The Auditor General: looking again at the contracts signed]

Himilo newspaper, Hargeysa April 25, 2015, '*Qaxootiga Yurub oo lagu sifeeyey cayayaan liita*' 'Refugees described as bad as insects in Europe.'

Yuusuf Garaad, Xaqiiqa Times newspaper, Muqdisho April 10, 2015, '*Warfaafin mise sirfaafin?*' [News broadcasting or secrets broadcasting?]

Foore Newspaper, Hargeysa, April 30, 2015, '*Qurbe joogta reer Awdal waxay 90% aaminsan yihiin Somalilandnimada: Madaxweyne Ku-Xigeenka*' [Vice President: 90% of the Awdal diaspora communities believe in Somaliland],

Xog Doon newspaper, Muqdisho, April 13, 2015, '*Maxaa laga dheefey mashruuca QUEST?*' [What was gained from the Quest program?], a critique of UNDP and IOM program to bring 'Qualified, Expatriate, Somali, Technical Support' to Government institutions.

Xaqiiqa Times newspaper editorial, Muqdisho, March 10-23, 2015, '*Dam Jadiid ma ihi*' [I'm not Dam Jadiid]

Axmed Cabdihaaddi Cabdullaahi, Xaqiiqa Times newspaper, Muqdisho, March 10-23, 2015, '*Maxaa dhacaya haddii lafeydo cawrada qabiilka?*' [What happens if we uncover the shame of clan?]

Xog Ogaal newspaper, Muqdisho, February 8, 2015 '*Magacyada, qabiiladaiyo jufooyinka ay ka soo jeedaan wasiirada, wasiiru ku xigeenada iyo wasiiru-dowlayaasha*' [The names, clans and positions of ministers, vice ministers and state ministers]

Cabdiqaadir Muuse Yuusuf 'Gentleman', *Ilays* newspaper, Garoowe, February 16 2015, '*Mustaqbalka Puntland 2016-ka ka dib: Isbedeladda socda iyo saamayntooda*'. [The future of Puntland after 2016: changes and their effects]

Kaaha Bari newspaper, March 6, 2015, '*Somaliland caqabad ku noqotay wadahadalka ay dowladda Somalia Turkiga kula yeelan laheyd*' [Somaliland obstructs talks with Government of Somaliland which were to take place in Turkey]

Saalax Cali Waaberi, Puntland Today, September 21, 2015, '*Somaliland oo dadaal ugu jirta in ay qorshe gurraacan ku hanato Sanaag*' [Somaliland strives for wicked plan over Sanaag]

Ogaal newspaper, Hargeysa, April 30, 2015, '*Hal ku dhigga sanadkan*' [This year's slogan]

Weli Cabsiye, Ogaal newspaper, Hargeysa, May 5, 2015, '*Dawlada Xamar: Dib u raac taariikhda geesiyada Somaliland?*' [The Muqdisho Government: follow the bravery of the Somaliland heroes?]

Himilo newspaper, Hargeysa, March 25, 2015, 'Interview with Head of Somalia Immigration'.

Maxamed Sadiiq, *Ogaal* newspaper, April 30, 2015, '*Saleebaanoow ama Soomaalilaand baad abaal marin ama saarka qabiilka*' [Saleebaan! You will either reward Somaliland reward or the clan spirits]

Appendix

Jamal Madaar, Geeska Afrika newspaper, Hargeysa May 10, 2015 '*Fitnada ka soo foolle mashruuca Xunbo Weyne*' [The chaos of the Xunbo Weyne project]

Appendix 3. List of interviews

Included here are formal, extended and semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The list excludes numerous shorter unsolicited interactions with media consumers in cafes, hotels and universities in Garoowe, Hargeysa and Muqdisho). Listed chronologically and by research site:

Garoowe

Cumar Shidle, independent media consultant, Rugsan Hotel, Garoowe, 27 February 2015

Mukhtar Xersi Maxamed, head of Audio/Visual unit, Puntland Development Research Centre, Garoowe, 28 February 2015

Cabdiweli Xirsi Cabdulle ‘Indhaguran’, Puntland Minister of Information, Communication, Culture and Heritage, Ministry Office, Garoowe, February 28 2015

Cabdiraxman Warsame Jama, Chair of Puntland Chamber of Commerce, Rugsan Hotel, Garoowe, 3 March 2015

Cabdifatah Askar, Director of Puntland Television, Garoowe PLTV Headquarters, 3 March 2015 (also via email correspondence)

Maxamuud Siciid Xuseen, Former Deputy Puntland Justice Minister, Rugsan Hotel, Garoowe, 4 March 2015

Maxamed Yusuf Jama ‘Tigey’, Governor of Mudug Region, Rugsan Hotel, 4 March 2015

Focus group 1 (5 male, 1 female university students, anonymous), Puntland State University, Garoowe, 7 March 2015

Focus group 2 (8 male, 1 female university students – anonymous), Puntland State University, Garoowe, 7 March 2015

Focus group 3 (8 male university students – anonymous), Puntland State University, Garoowe, 8 March 2015

Focus group 4 (8 male students – anonymous), Puntland State University, Garoowe, 8 March 2015

Xuseen Yassin ‘Gorogoro’, Owner/operator of Shacab Media (online news), Rugsan Hotel, Garoowe, 9 March 2015

Dr Nuur Axmed, Puntland Vice Minister of Information, Communication, Culture and Heritage, Ministry Office, Garoowe, March 9 2015

Keyse Yusuf Aden, Secretary, Puntland Ministry of Information, Communication, Culture and Heritage, Ministry Office, Garoowe, March 9 2015

Faisal Khalif Barre, Chairman, Media Association of Puntland (via Skype) 25 and 26 April 2015

Hargeysa

Maxamed Jaamac ‘Dhage’, Novelist, Mansoor Hotel, Hargeysa, 28 April, 2015

Abdikaar (only first name given), Newspaper-vendor, Safari Hotel, Hargeysa, 28 April 2015

Cabdilaahi Maxamed Dahir, Minister of Information, Culture and National Guidance, Ministerial Office, Hargeysa, 30 April 2015

Mubaarak Ibrahim, Director, Beder International University, Safari Hotel, 30 April, 2015

Zakariye Axmed Maxamed, Journalist, Radio Hargeysa, Main office, Idaacad Neighbourhood, Hargeysa, 30 April 2015

Dr. Cabdiraxman Xuseen Axmed, Writer/Academic Development Director, Gollis University, Hargeysa, 27 March 2014

Appendix

Boobe Yusuf Ducaale, Writer/Secretary of Media and Communications of Wadani Party, Safari Hotel, Hargeysa, 4 May 2015

Maxamuud Cabdi Jaamac, Chairman, Somaliland Journalists' Association (SOLJA), office, Hargeysa, 4 and 6 May 2015

Cabdiraxman 'Guri Barwaaqo', Head of Gaariye School for Somali language and culture, University of Hargeysa, 5 May 2015

Cabdirisaaq Axmed, Head of Administration, Jamhuuriya Newspaper, office, Hargeysa, 6 May 2015

Yoonis Cali Nuur, Journalist (retired, ex-BBC Somali service), SOLJA office, Hargeysa, 7 May 2015

Focus group 1 (3 female, 3 male university students, anonymous), Gollis University, 7 May 2015

Focus group 2 (6 male university students, anonymous), Gollis University, 9 May 2015

Focus group 3 (5 male university students, anonymous), Gollis University, 10 May 2015

Xamda Xuseen Maxamed Cigaal, Journalist/columnist, Email correspondence, May 2015

Muqdisho

Hotel owner (anonymous), hotel, Muqdisho, 8 February 2015

Communications Officer (anonymous), International humanitarian organisation, Muqdisho office, 12 February 2015

Male ex international humanitarian organisation Muqdisho head of office (anonymous), hotel, Muqdisho, 29 January 2015

Hotel domestic staff (1 male, 2 female – *anonymous*) hotel, Muqdisho, 31 January 2015

Male journalists (x3, anonymous), Goobjoog Media, hotel, Muqdisho, 2 February 2015

Driver (x1), private security guards (x2) (anonymous), hotel, Muqdisho, 11 February 2015

Cabdiqaadir Sheekh Shakuna, Minister of Ports, Interim Southwest Administration, hotel, Muqdisho, 11 February and 12 April, 2015

Editor of Muqdisho print newspaper (anonymous), email correspondence, February-March 2015

Axmed Cali, Member of Board of Directors, Hormuud Telecom, hotel, Muqdisho, 8 April 2015

Yuusuf Xasan, editor, Xaqiiqa Times newspaper, hotel, Muqdisho, 9 April 2015

Female head of Muqdisho office (*anonymous*), International Humanitarian Organisation, Office, Muqdisho, 11 April 2015

Focus group (10 male, 4 female university students, anonymous), University of Muqdisho, Faculty of Journalism, Muqdisho, 13 April 2015

Male Journalist (anonymous), Shabelle Media, hotel, Muqdisho, 13 April 2015

Dr Ibrahim Maxamed Mursal, Head of Administration, University of Muqdisho, 13 April 2015

Nairobi

Cabdiladiif Dahir, journalist, Nairobi, May 13 2015

Fowziyo Omar, Producer, Radio Ergo Office, FAO Somalia Compound, Nairobi, May 13, 2015

London

Cali Saciid, Owner Keyd Media, café, Stockwell, London, May 27, 2015

Adam Matan and Sagal Bafo, Anti-Tribalism Movement, ATM Office, Shepherd's Bush, London, October 26, 2016.

Appendix 4. Questionnaire sample (Somali with English Translation)

Question designed and translated into Somali by the author and distributed amongst undergraduate in Muqdisho (University of Mogadishu); Garoowe (Puntland State University), and Hargeysa (Gollis University). Slightly different versions were used in Hargeysa, Garoowe and Muqdisho to account for dialect/spelling differences:

Daraasad ku saabsan isticmaalka tignoolojiyada warbaahinta Af Soomaaliga (Study on use of Somali media technology)

Aniga magacaygu waa Peter Chonka, waxaan diyaarinayaa daraasad PhD ee Jaamacadda Edinburgh (Dalka Ingiriiska). Maalmahan waxaan soo ururinayaa macluumaad la xidhiidhaa isticmaalka tignoolojiyo kala duwan ee warbaahinta Af Soomaaliga (tusaale ahaan raadiyow, internet, wargeys IWM). Halkan waxaan rabaa in aan ku weydiyo dhowr su'aal ku saabsan isticmaalkaaga tignoolojiyo warbaahineed. Haddii aad su'aalo qabtid ku saabsan daraasaddayda fadlan ii soo xidhiidh: p.j.chonka@sms.ed.ac.uk

[My name is Peter Chonka and I am preparing a PhD at the University of Edinburgh (UK). At the moment I am collecting data related to the use of different Somali language media technologies (for example radio, internet, newspapers etc.) Here I would like to ask you several questions concerning your use of media technology. If you have any questions about my research then please contact me at: p.j.chonka@sms.ed.ac.uk]

Haddii aad rabtaa in aan ku soo diro warbixinta ee daraasaddaas markuu la dhammeyey (waxaan rajaynayaa in aan 2016ka dhammeyn karta, insha'allah) fadlan halkaan ku qor email-kaaga:

[If you would like me to send you the outcome of this research when it is completed (I hope to finish in 2016 inshallah) then please write your email address here:]

Wax jawaab ah oo aad ii siiso waa mid astuuran ah: micnaha waxay tahay in macluumaadkaas ayaan isticmaali doona si magac la'aan ah marka diyaarinayaa warbixinta ugu dambeynta.

[All answers given are anonymous: this means that I will use data without names in the final report]

Macluumaadka jawaabaha: [Respondent information]

Da'daada:.....Jinsigaaga(lab/dheddig).....Magalaadaada/Xaafaddaada.....[Age, Gender, Town/neighbourhood]

Su'aalooyinka [the questions]

- 1) Sida caadiga ama qiyaas ahaan, toddobaad kasta imisa jeer ayaad isticmaashaa qaababkaas warbaahineed? (fadlan ✓ ku qor saf kasta) [Usually, or approximately, how many times per week do you use these forms of media – please put a tick on each line]

	Maalin kasta	Asbuuc 3 jeer	Asbuuc 2 jeer	Asbuuc 1 jeer	ka yar 1 jeer asbuuc kasta	Marnaba ma isticmaasho
Barnaamij warar ee TV						
Barnaamij warar ee Radiyow						
Wargeys/Joornal						
Bog war ah ee internetka						

[Television news Every day 3 times p/w 2 times p/w once p/w less than once never
Radio news
Newspaper
News website]

- 2) Haddaad daawataa barnaamij warar ee TV-ga (Af Soomaaliga), muxuu yahay channel-ka oo aad daawataa inta ugu badan? [If you watch TV news (Somali language), which channel do you watch most?]

- 3) Maxay tahay sababta ugu weyn in aad daawataa channel-kaas? (fadlan 1 sanduuq ku qor ✓) [What is the most important reason that you watch that channel?]

a) 'waxay bixiyaan warar ku saabsan meesha aan ku joogaa' ☐ [They broadcast news about the place I am in']

Appendix

- b) 'waan aaminaa wixii ay faafiyaan' ☐ ['I trust what they broadcast']
 c) 'waan is garanaynaa dadka soo saarayaan barnaamijkaas' ☐ ['I know the people who make that program']
 d) 'waan raacsanaa ra'igooda (tusaale ahaan xagga siyaasadda, diinta IWM) ☐ ['I agree with their opinions' (e.g. regards to politics, religion, etc.)]
 e) 'Qoyskayga/Ehelkayga way jecelyihiin baraaamijkaas ama channel-kaas' ☐ ['My family like that program or channel']
 f) Sabab kale (fadlan halkan ku qor): [Other reason: please write]
-
- 4) Haddaad dhageysataa wararka raadiyow-ga, maxay tahay idaacadda oo aad dhageysataa inta ugu badan? [If you listen to radio news, which channel do you listen to most?]
-
- 5) Maxay tahay sababta ugu weyn in aad dhageysataa idaacaddaas (fadlan 1 sanduuq ku qor ✓) [See Q3 options]
 a) 'waxay bixiyaan warar ku saabsan meesha aan ku joogaa' ☐
 b) 'waan aaminaa wixii ay faafiyaan' ☐
 c) 'waan is garanaynaa dadka soo saarayaan barnaamijkaas' ☐
 d) 'waan raacsanaa ra'igooda (tusaale ahaan xagga siyaasadda, diinta IWM) ☐
 e) 'Qoyskayga/Ehelkayga way jecelyihiin baraaamijkaas ama idaacaddaas' ☐
 f) Sabab kale (fadlan halkan ku qor):
-
- 6) Haddaad akhrisaa wararka internetka ee Afka Soomaaliga, muxuu yahay website-ka oo aad isticmaashaa inta ugu badan? [If you read online Somali language news, which website do you use most often?]
-
- 7) Maxay tahay sababta ugu weyn in aad isticmaashaa website-kaas (fadlan 1 sanduuq ku qor ✓) [See Q3 options]
 a) 'waxay bixiyaan warar ku saabsan meesha aan ku joogaa' ☐
 b) 'waan aaminaa wixii ay faafiyaan' ☐
 c) 'waan is garanaynaa dadka soo saarayaan website-kaas' ☐
 d) 'waan raacsanaa ra'igooda (tusaale ahaan xagga siyaasadda, diinta IWM) ☐
 e) 'Qoyskayga/Ehelkayga way jecelyihiin website-kaas' ☐
 f) Sabab kale (fadlan halkan ku qor):
-
- 8) Haddaad akhrisaa wargeys ama journal Afka Soomaaliga, muxuu yahay wargeyska oo aad akhrisaa inta ugu badan? [If you read Somali language newspapers, which paper do you read most often?]
-
- 9) Maxay tahay sababta ugu muhiimsan in aad akhrisaa wargeyskaas (fadlan 1 sanduuq ku qor ✓) [See Q3. Options]
 a) 'waxay bixiyaan warar ku saabsan meesha aan ku joogaa' ☐
 b) 'waan aaminaa wixii ay faafiyaan' ☐
 c) 'waan is garanaynaa dadka soo saarayaan wargeyskaas' ☐
 d) 'waan raacsanaa ra'igooda (tusaale ahaan xagga siyaasadda, diinta IWM) ☐
 e) 'Qoyskayga/Ehelkayga way jecelyihiin wargeyskaas' ☐
 f) Sabab kale (fadlan halkan ku qor):
-
- 10) Inta badan, xaggeed ku daawataa wararka TVga? (tusaale: Gurigaaga? Makhaayad? Cafe?...) [Mostly, where do you watch TV news? (e.g. in your home? At a resaturant? In a cafe?)]
- 11) Inta badan, xaggeed dhegeysataa wararka Raadiyowga?[...listen to Radio?]
- 12) Inta badan, xaggeed ku akhrisaa wararka internetka?[.....use Internet?]

Appendix

13) Inta badan, xaggeed ku akhrisaa joornaal/wargeys?[...read newspaper]

14) Miyaad isticmaalaysaa 'mobile-internet' ee telefoonkaaga si aad u hesho warar? Haa ☐ Maya ☐

[Do you use mobile internet to find news? – Y/N]

15) Ma is taqaan qof oo ka shaqayaa/shaqaysaa shirkad warbaahineed? Haa ☐ Maya ☐

[Do you personally know anyone who works for a media company? – Y/N]

16) **Xagga shacabka guud** ee xafaaddaada oo aad ku deggentahay, muxuu yahay qaabka/tignoolojiyga warbaahineed oo ay isticmaalaan inta ugu badan?

[In terms of the general population in your neighbourhood, what form of media technology do people use most? TV/radio/internet/Newspapers]

TV ☐ Raadiyow ☐ Internet ☐ Wargeys ☐

17) Miyaad akhrisaa/dhegaystaa/daawataa warbaahin ee luuqad kale? Haa ☐ Maya ☐

[Do you use read/listen/watch media in other languages? Y/N]

a) Haddii jawaabtaadii tahay 'haa', maxaad isticmaashaa? (Fadlan halkan ku qor magac website/barnaamij/Idaacad **io luuqadiis**)

[If you answered 'Yes', what do you use – please write the name of the website/program/station and the language]

.....

Aad baad u mahadsantahay wakhtigaaga iyo caawintaada!

[Thank you very much for your time and assistance!]

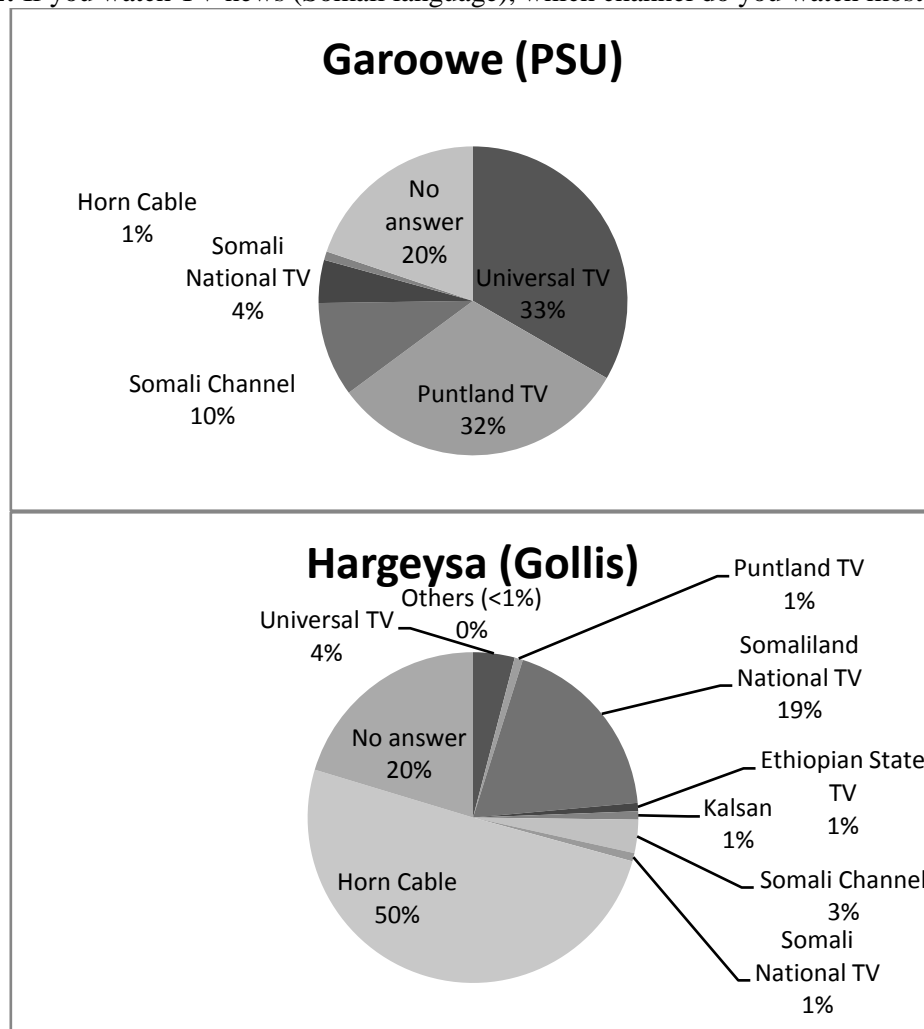
Appendix 5. Selected questionnaire results

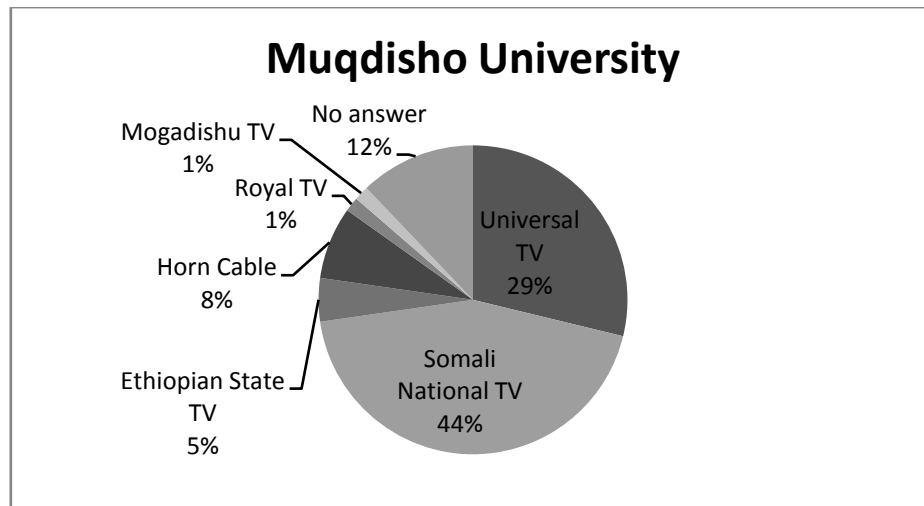
Individual locations and aggregated results (325 respondents). Data included here pertains most directly to thesis chapters' analyses. Full data-set retained by author.

Question: 'Usually, or approximately, how many times per week do you use these forms of media?'
Aggregated percentages (no significant difference between 3 locations) Radio highlighted as most likely to be consumed daily, newspaper highlighted as most likely not to be consumed at all.

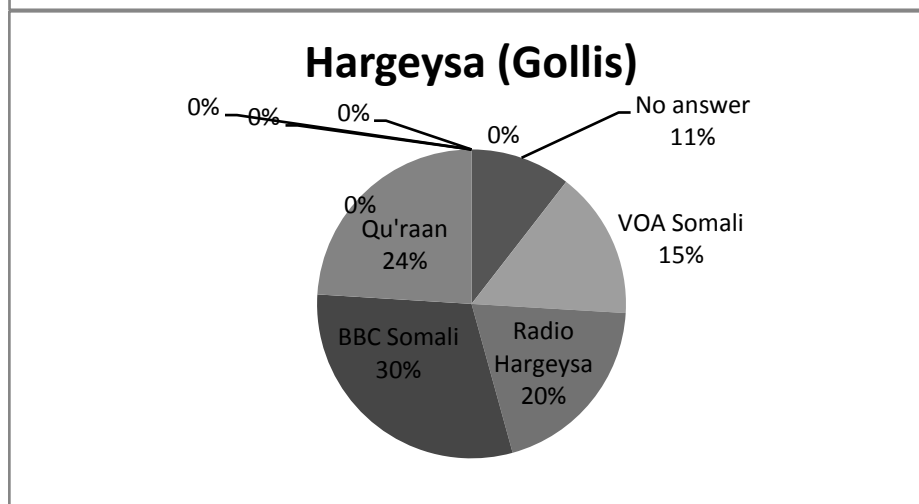
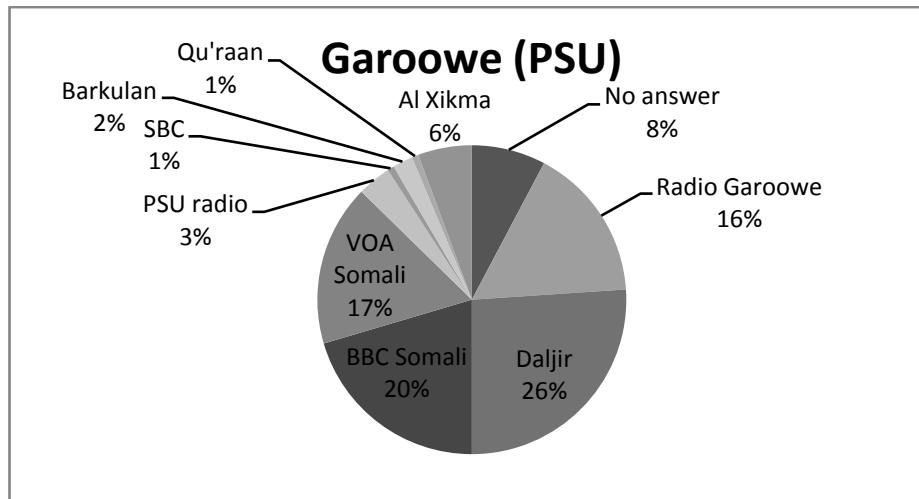
	Everyday	3 times p/w	twice	once	Less than once	never	
TV	58.3	13.5	5.9	8.0	6.3	8.0	100.0
Radio	59.9	10.0	5.6	7.8	6.3	10.4	100.0
Newspaper	24.1	9.2	7.2	17.7	17.3	24.5	100.0
Website	57.9	9.5	8.4	8.4	6.6	9.2	100.0

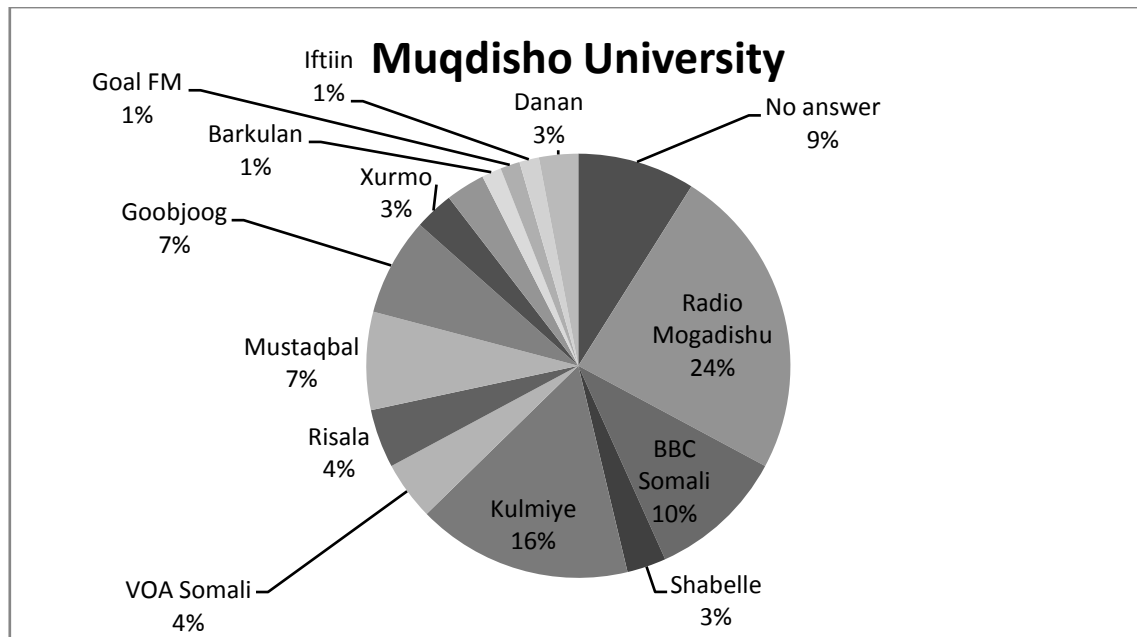
Question 2: If you watch TV news (Somali language), which channel do you watch most?





Question: ‘If you listen to radio news, which channel do you listen to most?’



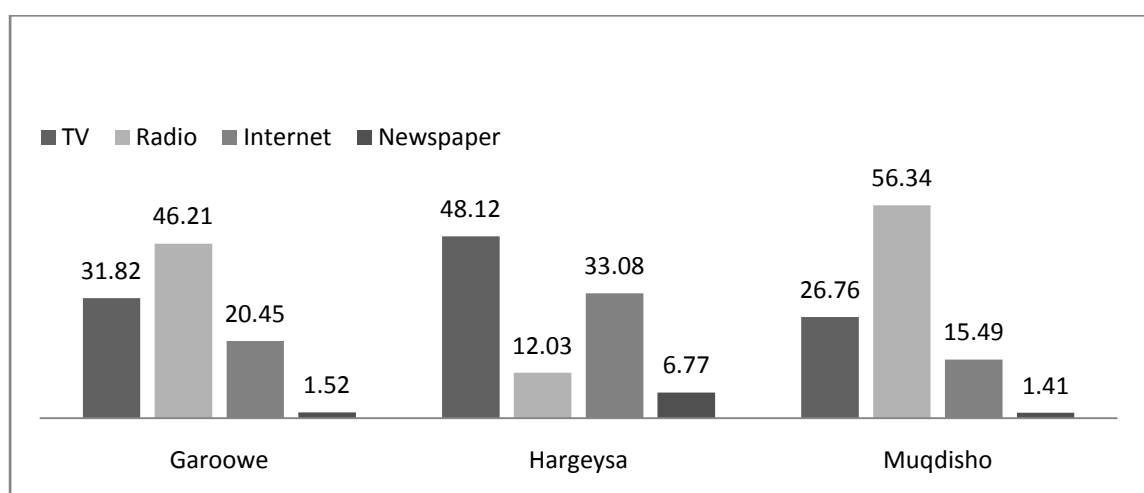


Question: ‘If you read online Somali language news, which website do you use most often?’ *This generated 64 different answers, with no single dominant website being identifiable across the research sites. Data from question 8 on newspaper consumption is not included here as there are no ‘national’ print newspapers consumed across the three territories.*

Question: ‘Do you use mobile internet to find news?’ **Yes 77%; No 23%** (Aggregate: no noticeable different across 3 sites)

Question: ‘Do you personally know anyone who works for a media company?’ **Yes 63%; No 37%** (Aggregate: no noticeable different across 3 sites)

Question: In terms of the general population in your neighbourhood, what form of media technology do people use most? *Percentage of students’ first choices shown:*



Question: ‘Do you use read/listen/watch media in other languages?’ **Yes: 77%; No 23%** (Aggregate: no noticeable different across 3 sites).

